LITERATURE FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

HOLLISTER

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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This Book Is Dedicated

to

THOMAS CLARKSON TRUEBLOOD

Master-teacher of the arts of speech, wise educator in the field of speech, to whose guidance in courses in Shakespearean Reading I owe my first liking for the living literature of drama and poetry, and under whose encouragement I was privileged to develop courses in oral interpretation and in play production;

to

HUNDREDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Whose quick intelligence, eager idealism, and ready response to the sincerities and abundancies of living thought in literature have given me rare pleasures in teaching oral interpretation and the production of plays, and strong faith in the latent goodness of young life;

to

VERY MANY PEOPLE

Whose apparent appreciation and pleasure in listening to the public interpretation of nearly all of the literature in this book has given me confidence in the cultural value of such literature, and in the educational and recreational worth of its public oral interpretation.

PREFACE

NOW THAT the theory and the literature of this book are about ready for the inspection and use of teachers, students, and others, this thought is first in my mind: the greatest good that may come from the use of this book will not be found in the cold print of the book itself, but in the experiences of those who use it; for good oral interpretation is a living experience and not a printed book. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this printed book may help some to find more fully the rich experiences that good oral interpretation can give.

That the oral interpretation of literature may be a very great good no one who knows the facts can doubt. Any teacher who has taught good oral interpretation, even imperfectly, has seen its value on the faces of students; and any student who has practiced good oral interpretation, even imperfectly, knows within himself its stimulating and satisfying power. Good oral interpretation is the supreme need today in the teaching of appreciation and enjoyment of great literature, and in the development of oral language sensitiveness as the basis of better speech habits and the source of sincerity and spontaneity in the creation of literature. The great literary models of living thought cannot be models until they are sensed in living speech.

While this book is intended for college classes in the oral interpretation of literature, there is no reason why its content of literature may not be used in a course in English literature where the teacher's aim is appreciation of literature as such, without regard to the history of authors, the chronology of literary events, or the study of literary form. It is high time that such a course in English literature should be the basic course in the study of literature; for it is more important that a liking for literature be cultivated in the schools than a knowledge concerning literature be presented to students.

While the literature contained in this book is intended for oral interpretation by college students, the larger part of it may well be used with high school students; for great literature is not written for specific grades in an educational system. Because college students may have read much of this literature is no reason why they should not now begin to know it more fully. Because they have read Bunner's

"One, Two, Three" in the grades, or Stevenson's "The Wind" and Dunbar's "The Boogah Man" when they were children, is no reason why they should not now begin to understand the richer adult life experiences that these poems hold. It is a great mistake to assume that a great piece of literature gives everything it has the first time, or the second time, or the third time, it is encountered, and that it belongs to any particular school age or class of individuals. Children have enjoyed, in their own way, an oral interpretation of "Macbeth" as well as gray-haired adults who have seen it played by the great actors. Great oral literature is never completely limited in its appeal, and is never worn out. It always remains a land for new discoveries. It always remains a source of spiritual wealth in spite of the fears of academic administrators that credit may be given twice for covering the same body of literature.

Practically all of the literature in this book has been pleasurably interpreted from memory by students at the University of Michigan before classes and public audiences; and under adequate instruction can be so interpreted by students of any college and many high schools. Yet some of this literature calls for more than elementary and ordinary interpretive ability, and more than commonplace mental grasp on the part of listeners. "The Ring and the Book" is not easy material for oral interpretation. Its sustained and involved thought taxes the mental tenacity and power of clear communication of most students, yet it is splendid material to develop the interpretive powers of more advanced students. In the hands of a masterful interpreter it has even been successfully used before large audiencs on a chautauqua program. However, it is not popular material in the sense that it amuses an audience.

The literature in this book has not been selected because it is entertaining in the ordinary sense, nor for the purpose of training professional entertainers, but because it has the inherent possibilities of being richly satisfying when well interpreted orally. This is the underlying idea back of its selection. Further attempt to state the principles of selection used is not needed here. In general I may say that clever writings, journalistic writings, theatric writings, psychopathic writings, propagandic writings, moralistic writings, and writings for the passing diversion of a reading public have been avoided. It is needless to say that the body of literature here included is but a small part of literature worthy of oral interpretation.

Just a word in regard to the *Introduction* of this book and its use. It is not intended as text-book material to be studied page by page. While it stands first in the book, I should not offer it as the first "lesson" to students in oral interpretation. I should first bring students directly in contact with some of the lyrics and short poems in this book, and when the practical work in oral interpretation is under way I should invite or require them to read parts of the *Introduction,* especially those parts that apply most directly to the development of excellence in oral interpretation. However, each teacher should use or not use the *Introduction,* according to his own best common sense. It is here to be used with the hope that its use will be stimulating and profitable in developing excellence in oral interpretation.

R. D. T. Hollister

Ann Arbor, Michigan,
September 20, 1929.

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INTRODUCTION

PART I

THE PROBLEM IN ORAL INTERPRETATION

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING to be done in a study of oral interpretation of literature is for each student to find and perfect within himself the latent abundancies of life as these are stimulated by printed literature and liberated in oral expression. This fundamental problem is a personal and practical one that each student should face earnestly and eagerly. It belongs to each individual alone and not to a group. It is a problem of getting, through intelligent understanding and imaginative insight, a flesh-and-blood tingle from literature, rather than a problem of getting impersonal facts, objective information, or critical opinions. Impersonal facts, objective information, and critical opinions in a study of oral interpretation are often interesting and occasionally useful as an indirect means to the higher ends of oral interpretation. There is general and technical knowledge to be obtained, there are notions of excellence to be discussed and ways of achievement to be considered, but the important thing above all in oral interpretation is the achievement of excellence. This one thing is the prize towards which all other things should lead. Without the achievement of a larger excellence all other things in a study of oral interpretation are "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable."

The achievement of a larger excellence is the experience that will satisfy most, and will make most clear and significant the facts, information, and notions concerning oral interpretation. This experience should be sought, first and last, as the source of satisfaction and the basis of understanding in a study of oral interpretation. This experience can probably be most quickly and directly found through systematic classroom opportunity for frequent high-grade platform interpretation of the best literature; under the guidance of an intelligent, wise, and friendly teacher. This is primarily a practical and not a theoretical problem.

In order to learn to swim one must get into the water deeply enough to feel its lifting and engulfing powers, for swimming is a thing to be done in water. A book on swimming and an instructor

in swimming will be helpful only where there is water in which to learn, and a chance to use it. No one can learn to swim who has to obey the injunction, "Hang your clothes on a hickory limb, but don't go near the water." So it is with oral interpretation of literature. No one can learn the higher excellencies of oral interpretation from a book on oral interpretation alone. Oral interpretation is a thing to be done; an experience to be felt in nerves and flesh, rather than a collection of thought specimens to be labeled, classified, and catalogued. In order to know in experience the higher excellencies of oral interpretation there must be fine literature suitable for oral interpretation, and a chance to get into it deeply enough in company with others to feel its lifting and invigorating powers.

Excellence, as we have applied it to oral interpretation, is a relative, rather than an absolute goal. The achievement of excellence does not mean the achievement of perfection. Perfection is a fixed ideal, an end which attained leaves nothing beyond for which to strive. Any fixed objective loses its force as an ideal when it is attained. Excellence in oral interpretation should be thought of as a changing objective; an expanding ideal; a relative level of achievement.

There are many degrees and levels of excellence. Growth in oral interpretation is simply progress from one level to a higher one. As Tennyson suggests in "Ulysses," "All experience is an arch wherethrough gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades forever and forever when I move." The horizons of excellence in oral interpretation move as we move, becoming more or less perfect in response to our movements.

If one has vision, he never reaches or passes beyond its horizon. As Browning implies in "Life in a Love" when one succeeds most, he must in a sense fail, if he has an ideal before him. "My life is a fault at last, I fear: it seems too much like a fate, indeed! Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed. But what if I fail in my purpose here? It is but to keep the nerves at strain, to dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall, and baffled, get up and begin again—so the chase takes up one's life, that's all." This philosophy may well be applied to the pursuit of excellence in oral interpretation. As long as there is vision of something higher there will be momentary consciousness of

failure in attainment. The pleasures and satisfactions in oral interpretation must come from the rich experiences of the journey more than from the journey's end. "'Tis not what man does that exalts him, but what he would do." "What I aspired to be, and was not, comforts me." Again Browning is right, providing that what man would do is more excellent than what he does, and providing that what he does brings him closer in achievement, or fullness of vision, to what he would do.

In our aspirations and efforts towards excellence in oral interpretation it is interesting to remember that it is easier to aspire than to achieve; that to know is easier than to do. This may be the reason why we are tempted to spend so much time trying to know and so little trying to do. This may also be the reason why there are so many critics and so few creators and recreators of great oral literature. There is much light-hearted sense in Portia's remark to Nerissa, "If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. . . . . I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching." This common sense, true in itself, and comforting to those who try to achieve yet fail in part to reach their ideals, may lead some to declare, "I can know it, but it's useless for me to try to do it"; and by this frame of mind to keep themselves from the knowledge that comes from trying to do.

While doing is the more difficult and knowing is the easier way, the doing in oral interpretation is the more important; even though it results in crude achievement as far as others can judge. The personal effort involved in doing tends to awaken in the individual concerned a larger vision of what is good to be done. Such larger vision into the ideals of excellence may be, after all, the greatest value that can come to an individual from personal training in oral interpretation. One should try to grow in power to interpret well, not so much "to confound the ignorant, and amaze, indeed, the very faculties of eyes and ears," as to enlarge his own insight into life, through this very effort to express the life experiences which literature stimulates. By trying to use his inadequate self in expressing the richer experiences

of life, he gains a larger personal vision of the richness of these experiences. This gives him satisfaction. This gratifies his natural need for a personal insight into the adequate expression of life richly experienced. What if he himself fails as a public interpreter of literature? He has nevertheless gained a larger personal insight. This in itself is enough to justify his efforts. This is a greater reward than the applause of audiences, and the commendation of critics.

The larger achievement of excellence in oral interpretation cannot be gained from inferior literature. For this reason the printed literature brought together in the pages of this book is intended to be of high quality in its powers to stimulate rich and genuine realizations of life, and in its powers to satisfy abundantly our needs for adequate expression. Much commonly-accepted standard literature for study and silent reading, and much interesting literature for critical, philosophical, and historical consideration is not suited for oral interpretation; and therefore would be out of place in this book. Sufficient for our needs here is literature that can live in sincere and spontaneous speech; literature that rings true in oral interpretation. Such literature, when it lives, draws out the best in life. It gives the oral interpreter an impulse towards sincerity and power of insight in expression. Such literature brings the student and teacher face to face with the fundamental problem of finding the abundancies of life in literature, and of giving adequate expression to these abundancies in company with other people. In the oral interpretation of such literature may be had a foretaste of the satisfactions that come from life richly understood and adequately expressed.

The central problem in oral interpretation has two phases which ultimately blend into one. First there is the problem of finding in ourselves, under the suggesting power of great oral literature, those deep, rich, inner-life experiences, that are most truly our own. Second, there is the problem of awakening in others, through the suggesting power of our own oral interpretation, similar inner-life experiences, that are most truly their own. The first is a problem of self-discovery through oral literature; the second is a problem of leading others to find themselves through the power of oral interpretation. This apparently dual problem thus stated implies many subtle discriminations concerning the nature of thought, of printed literature,

and of oral interpretation. These discriminations may be developed more fully to better purpose in a book on oral interpretation. Nevertheless, for our purposes here a suggestion of some of these may help us to understand with greater clearness the practical problem before us. Let us attempt to see what some of these discriminations are.

Thought, when it is a living, personal, inner-life experience, rather than an objective, arm's-length observation, is self-created. It is not something that can be collected or accumulated like material things. It cannot be fixed and held in unchanging form. It can only be remembered as a fleeting, changing experience. Thought is something that germinates and grows in the memory and imagination, in reaction to stimulations from without and states-of-being from within. Thought is a state-of-being—life in its own "rose mesh," and in its outer environment. It is a kind of mental-physical process of mastication, digestion, and assimilation of stored up and present experience.

Living thought is not something that once was: that belonged to an author, and now belongs to an author in printed form. An author's thought in printed form is always dead, but its essence can find reincarnation in another thinker. It must be born again in order to live, and when it lives, it belongs to the interpreter as a creative thinker. It belongs to the interpreter not as a possession handed down from the past, but as an experience of the instant. Although related to the past and significant to the future, it belongs to the present moment only. It is not something that an interpreter has prepared for an audience and is now to deliver to them as prepared. In order to be living it must be recreated at the instant and on the spot. It cannot remain fixed and be living. It is always changing; growing or fading in its clearness, its meaning, its associations and suggestions. It is a living electric-like play of nervous energy surging intelligently in the flesh.

Thinking, as a living, personal experience, involves the whole being; not merely the head at its top, but the face, the lips, the tears, the finger-tips, the heart, the lungs, the glands, the muscles—the whole being of a man. At one moment one part of the whole being may be involved in thought more than other parts; at another moment another part or area may be more strongly involved. Thought focuses,

or localizes itself in the flesh; and through the wise economy of ever-changing variety protects itself from expressional monotony and nervous exhaustion.

Hamlet, after hearing from the lips of the Ghost the story of his father's murder and his mother's sin, cries out within himself, "Hold, hold, my heart; and you, my sinews, grow not instant old, but bear me stiffly up." Here his thinking strikes a great blow in his throat and upper chest, and in the strong muscles of his arms and legs, so that he feels sick and weak. Living thought always localizes itself.

When Queen Guinevere says to the little novice, who could brook no silence and was humming a tune, "O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing, sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep," her thinking localized itself in the opening of the floodgates of tears about her eyes and mouth, and in the deepening surges of her breathing. When Lady Teazle says to Sir Peter, "You should have adopted me and not married me. I am sure you were old enough," her thinking finds focal outlet in the constricting curl of the upper lip and in the tossing lift of the head. All thought that is alive and personal centers itself somewhere in the flesh. It has no other place in which to have its "local habitation." This localized thought is emotion. Without it thought cannot be living and personal.

The development of richness and abundance in personally-created thinking in the oral interpretation of literature is inseparably bound up with the richness and abundance of the expressional localizations liberated in the flesh. Weak, faulty, or inhibited expressional localizations of the thought are undoubtedly a common cause of failure on the part of many students to grasp and be moved by the thought that great literature should release in them. For this reason the liberation of rich, varied, and spontaneous expressional impulses through oral interpretation is one of the best means through which students may find the lifting and invigorating power of thought latent in literature.

Capacity for personally-realized thought depends upon capacity for expressional sensitiveness and response. Wherever the latent capacities for expressional sensitiveness and response have been undeveloped by use or paralyzed by inhibitions, the capacity for personally realized thought is usually weaker than it should be. Where

expressional sensitiveness and response is lacking there is usually some form of dullness, backwardness, or stupidity. This is quickly observed in the expressional inactivity of the eyes and mouth.

Very much undeveloped expressional sensitiveness is the result of fear. Nature instinctively defends itself from danger. A clam shuts up to protect its more vital inner life. It grows a rigid shell that makes it seem dead like a stone. So human nature shuts up through fear. Persons with greatest capacities for expressional sensitiveness often suffer the greatest expressional inhibitions. Fear freezes them; incrusts them in an interior inexpressiveness that keeps the inner life from growing freely. Such persons need a liberation of the spirit in the flesh. They need sympathetic encouragement in the use and development of free physical expression.

On the other hand, lack of expressional sensitiveness in some persons is due to a natural slowness or numbness in physical response. There are plow horses as well as race horses; and a plow horse should not be groomed for the race track, even though race horses are often at the plow. However, inherent physical slowness does not absolutely fix the expressional sensitiveness of an individual, even though it seems to put outer limits upon it. There are individual differences even among plow horses; and within each individual there are widely separated upper and lower levels of capacity within which expressional sensitiveness and the richness of thought realization may grow. Where expressional inactivity comes from natural slowness of the flesh (which is often unaccompanied by fear) there is need of conscious effort to use the flesh in physical expression.

A sensitive instrument is one that detects and records fine differences in weight, space, time, quality, etc. Expressional sensitiveness detects and reveals fine differences in thought discriminations. In fact, it is an inherent part of such discriminations. Dullness in the sense of touch, not only in the finger tips and in the face, but in the consciousness of localized muscular tensions and activities as a part of thought, is directly related to limited and undeveloped thought capacity. For this reason the liberation of muscular responsiveness through eurythmic physical exercises is a sound educational method for liberating and enlarging thought experience. The contributions made to musical education by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze are not limited

in their importance to music. Eurythmic physical training has basic value in all education. However, perhaps a more direct method of liberating muscular responsiveness is the encouragement and free use of the expressional impulses experienced in the oral interpretation of literature. Such liberated physical expression because it is associated with specific ideas rather than with general emotions and moods, such as music may stimulate, leads directly to the higher capacities for clear and personally-realized thought.

Any interference with freedom, spontaneity, and vigor in the exercise of expressional sensitiveness, such as may be caused by the mechanics of the printed page, or by fear, or speech weaknesses, limits the unfolding of thought capacity in an individual, and lessens his capacity for insight into great literature. This is one reason why the development of free and ready speech habits, and of keen oral language sensitiveness, is essential to a large capacity for the creative appreciation and oral interpretation of great literature.

Expressional sensitiveness, and liberated expressional impulses, mean liberated muscles and liberated localized physical states; but liberated expressional impulses do not mean excessive, uncontrolled, overworked, or over-focused local activity. Action is more than visible movement. The interpreter may make wide movements, walk the platform from one end to the other, screw his face from ear to ear, wiggle "her" shoulders and roll "her" eyes, and yet have no essential of action. Visible movement is simply a matter of motion in space, such that the eye can easily detect. Action is a sense of motion in muscular and nervous tensions; a consciousness of being alive and going on in time and space; a sense of freedom in movement when no external movement is seen; an alertness and attention of muscle ready for specific and satisfying visible movement. Action is a bird dog pointing a grouse, or a rattlesnake poised to strike. It is meaningful and motivated energy with visible motion as its usual accompaniment and outer sign.

If there is true expressional impulse there is action, and the escape of this impulse in visible motion is a natural means of encouraging and intensifying the impulse. But when the liberty of expressional impulse becomes a riot of visible motion and excess sound, this riot weakens the expressional sensitiveness and cuts down the capacity

for creative and personal thought. In other words, while the development of responsive movement (including the movement of vocal muscles in speech) where movement is stiff or lacking, is extremely important as a means of freedom, variety, and vigor in expressional sensitiveness, excessive or self-conscious movement for its own sake tends to weaken the sensitiveness in personal thought, and thus tends to interfere with the achievement of higher excellence in oral interpretation. It is just as important that excessive and random visible and audible movements be controlled and turned into the riches of thought as it is that palsied and inhibited muscles be set free in action to play their part in the enrichment of thought.

Thought is more than a printed page. Literature as something printed—published in books, is not the same as literature living in the constructive intelligence and creative imagination of an individual. When we speak of great literature we do not have in mind the greatness of its printed form—the richness and skill of the printer's and binder's craft. Rather do we think of the influence and the abundance of the thought-experience that the printed literature awakens in ourselves and in others. Some literature is called great because of its evolutionary and historical significance in relation to an author, or his times, or the rise and decline of a line of ideas; just as Alexander, and Washington, and Napoleon are called great. Such literature may no longer move us personally; it may not even interest us; but it was moving or significant in its day. In a higher sense really great literature is great now. It may have been written in far off times and even in other tongues, but it still has the power to make life throb. It is the literature of throbbing life rather than the literature of the printed page, or of the historical development of ideas, religions, politics, social institutions, etc. that may belong to us as personal experience. Through such literature we may find awakened in ourselves a personal, instant, first-hand, creative realization and expression of thought. In such literature we may have the pleasure of knowing in our own flesh the meaning and satisfaction of great thinking. This personal insight and satisfaction is the highest gift that literature can give. History is interesting in relation to the social order, but really great literature is vital to the human soul. History is a social study; literature is a personal need.

The oral interpreter of really great literature can find nothing vital in the symbols of the printed page as such; nothing as an active moral and spiritually-cultural force. What he finds must come out of his own intelligence and creative imagination working, under the influence of the printed symbols, among the memories of the things he has known: working among the memories of his physiological and psychological experiences; among the things he has seen and felt, and tasted, and thought about; among both his first-hand experiences and the experiences created by his understanding and his imagination; among "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still"; among "blue days and fair"; among "the two hearts beating, each to each"; among "What's done cannot be undone"; among "The redheads in the cherry trees, and beehives where you got to be so careful going by"; among the multitudinous perceptions and reflections that are the birthright and pleasure of alert and healthy minds. The oral interpreter gets from printed literature only what he can give out of the latent abundance of his own experience, intelligence, and creative imagination.

In spite of this fact, without the stimulating possibilities of great literature, the latent abundances within the interpreter might never be awakened. Printed literature and the power of its symbols to start thinking in the minds of those who have learned to read, is the stimulating force that sets the memory at work, and motivates the imagination. It is like the sunshine and the warm rain in the spring. Where there is life, this life expands and grows under their influence. While the interpreter must think for himself, he must submit himself to the leadership and influence of the thoughts that arise within him in response to the suggestions of printed literature.

Such terms as "mind," "memory," "imagination," and "inner-life experience" are general terms. They cannot be exactly defined. Yet it may be well to try to think about them for a moment. The mind may be thought of as the whole being of man. Memory is the collector and keeper of the art gallery of the mind: the place where faces, landscapes, pressures, temperatures, time changes and space movements, rhythms, joys, sorrows, laughters, hatreds, tears, and the countless experiences of life, are caught in their essential meanings, and kept in the changing lights and colors of the "long, fair-chambered

corridor of years." Memory, we are told, knows everything—the whole vast gallery; every room, every collection, every display case, every shut drawer, every pigeonhole, every closet and storage place of unimportant things. Memory knows the way to every room. It has the keys to all reserved and precious things. But memory is very busy. It has its daily guide work to perform: its dusting to do, its new acquisitions to acknowledge and store for examination, classification, and display. Its acquisitions are many, for there are many clamorous donators in a world of men and print. The storerooms of unexamined things are full. Memory is overworked. It needs a private secretary and an office force to open mail, interview the press, and run routine business. Memory needs time among its rarer treasures: time to know them in their new lights, and to show their new colors to old friends. Memory needs time to travel with imagination in the wonderland of thought.

Imagination is the creating, constructing power of the mind. With memory as its guide it moves through the galleries of the mind, sees the old familiar forms, and then goes forth into the unknown world, where it discovers new treasures, and turns them over for memory to keep. Imagination selects bits of old experiences, and mixes and magnifies them into new experiences that no man has known. We say imagination is the "stuff that dreams are made of"; but the dreams of the imagination are more than the pleasant dozings of the mind, or the nightmares of fitful sleep. They are the visions that are seen in the purest light of memory and reason. Imagination is the dreaming power of the mind when the mind is most richly awake. But imagination is also the reasoning power of the mind. It finds things with relationships, puts them clearly side by side in such a way that cause and effect and conclusion are self-evident. Imagination brings one and one together so that there are three, and the third is the mind's own child. To the feeble imagination the adoption of the thoughts of others may seem the safest way to appear intelligent, but such adoption as a mental habit will not remove the weakness of sterile thinking. The imagination, like all other living processes, grows and maintains its vigor through use.

The substance of the best in oral interpretation is inner-life experience. It is this that the interpreter seeks to get through literature,

and tries to stimulate in those who listen to him. Inner-life experience is something that can neither be photographed with a camera nor measured with a yardstick. It eludes pyschological tests and objective educational measurements. It eludes exposition and argument. Yet it exists as an intangible fact in life. It is not an external act and fact that may be observed, but rather the interpretation that imagination and expressional sensitiveness give to acts and facts. It is the dreams, faiths, and motive forces that ingrain themselves in the mind. It is not so much an actual state of heat or cold, hardship or comfort in the flesh, as it is the meanings of such things, interpreted and remembered in a mind-in-flesh experience. The actual states of hardship or comfort as intense individual experiences may never have existed, but their meanings in full intensity may be known through the imagination. The imagination is the main source of rich inner-life experience.

The individual who has had little chance to know acts and facts first hand, who has not seen much of the world of things for himself, who has not known as a physical or emotional experience the more common good and ill that flesh is heir to, may find it difficult to understand and know the richer states of inner-life experience that literature can arouse. To many a city-bred student much of the finest in James Witcomb Riley's writings is as a foreign language. "Willows whiten, aspens quiver" in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" is "Greek" to the majority of unaided college students. They have not the basis of first hand experience to know without help from others the inner pleasures that these printed symbols stand for. A chance to come into direct contact with many and varied things should help the interpreter to a deeper insight into life, especially if his mind's eye is open and his imagination is wide awake. Travel should give the interpreter insight; yet the richness of inner-life experience is not so much a matter of how much one has seen, as of how one has seen what is seen and how much one sees that is not presented to the outer eye: it is not so much a matter of physical travel; of the transportation of the body by railroad, or steamship, or camel back: it is not so much a matter of quantity and repetition of sense perceptions or physical states—of adding landscapes to landscapes, art galleries to art galleries, theater shows to theater shows,

dinner parties to dinner parties, gluttony to gluttony. One may stay at home yet travel to the ends of the earth. One who has seen a house has seen a city. One who has seen a hill has seen a mountain. One who has seen the cuttings of a little stream has seen the canyons of the Colorado. It is not necessary to kill a king in order to know the horror of Macbeth. The whole universe of acts and facts is open to the mind with great imagination. "I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all." The greatest glory of man is the power of the mind to travel quickly through time and space while the flesh remains in its customary surroundings. Upon this power depends the deepest insight into those inner-life experiences that men have tried to catch and hold in printed literature.

The interpreter of literature should not pose merely as the agent or mouthpiece of the original author—Browning, Tennyson, Keats, or another. He should not refuse his chance for personal thought by pretending that the thought he speaks is the author's alone. He should enjoy the privilege of personal ownership of thought. He should speak for himself as influenced by the original author, but should be gratefully conscious of the inspiration the author has given him.

In oral interpretation at its best, the interpreter ceases to be an interpreter in the ordinary sense, and becomes a constructive thinker, with an insight into life, and a wisdom of expression that may transcend the author whose writings have stimulated and guided him. In short, the interpreter may become an author under an author's influence. As a creative thinker he is not limited to the mental reaches of the author. The author drops a word that sets his companion, the interpreter, thinking along certain lines; and if the interpreter is true to himself and free to think, the wealth and individuality of his thought cannot be the same as that of the author. While both author and interpreter may be thinking along lines that seem alike, either one may surpass the other in the vigor and abundance of his thought.

Thought at its best is individual. It belongs to one person rather than to a group or corporation. It is personal property rather than public property. It may belong in varied forms to a great many individuals as their own thought, just as similar houses may belong to many people as their own homes; but it does not belong to the tribe, or to the united kingdom. The interpreter of literature, if he

is true to his best individuality, must express his own thoughts as these are awakened by the literature.

It is easy for persons to think and speak the general thought of the whole people. General thought is a social product, forced upon the individual by the education of early years, or accepted by him as a mask for his individuality. Individual thought is submerged in this general thought, just as a citizen is often swallowed up by the state. There are a great many of these general thoughts, good in themselves, but belonging to no one personally and in particular: custom-made thoughts, abstractions, generalizations, gossips, social commonplaces, impersonal ideas behind which inner-life may hide; thought-masks worn like rouge as a substitute for red blood. There is even a kind of literature of impersonal opinion and manufactured imagination; straw-men writings; thought dummies; paper-and-ink dolls-of-the-mind, into which the breath of life was never breathed, yet something to be gambled for at the carnival; writings in which life is a manikin; a show window figure, to be draped and spot-lighted to attract the passing crowd; writings made by commercialists for clever entertainers and thought-lazy listeners; inane ideas set to catchy tunes; the verse a day that keeps the hearse away. There are even clever writings, whose only responsibility when the mob is stirred is, "mischief thou art afoot; take thou what course thou wilt." There is in all such kinds of literature a superficiality and sham-of-fashion that covers up those inner-experiences essential to great literature.

The student who would know the deeper satisfactions that may come from good oral interpretation must turn aside from the literature of sham and impersonal opinion. He must search for literature in which his life may ring true; and having found it, he must learn to strip off all masking and pretense, and to stand soul-naked and unashamed in the presence of his own best thoughts. He must learn to be himself, and not another: to plead his own cause, and not advocate the cause of a client. He must learn to submit himself more and more to the sense of truthfulness within him: true joy, true sorrow, true laughter, true tears, coming from knowledge, sympathy, and imagination. He must learn to care less and less for assumed and borrowed effects, that others may for the moment applaud, and seek more and more an inner satisfaction that comes from sincerity.

The highest art in oral interpretation is not the artifice of perfected deception. If it be, it is unworthy of a place among the deeper sincerities of life. It has no place in schools. It belongs to the realm of perfected rouge and high-heeled shoes. It is part of the theatrics that hide real life. It is one of the narcotics that stupifies life and keeps it from real pain and pleasure. While the artifice of perfected deception may seem to have a merciful place among a weary and stupid people, as a permanent ideal for the student of oral interpretation, it does not "give back the upward-looking and the light." In its ultimate influence upon the individual as interpreter or listener the artifice of perfected deception, sought for or attained, is worse than nothing; for it is neither true, nor beautiful, nor good.

One day not long after the death of Hamlet's father and the marriage of his mother to Claudius, when Hamlet is at court in the presence of the new king and the old queen, but out of harmony with them—a shadow across their new pleasures, sad faced and dressed in black,—his mother says to him, "Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off, and let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark. Do not forever with thy veiled lids seek for thy noble father in the dust. Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die, passing through nature to eternity." To this cold comfort Hamlet replies, "Ay, madam, it is common." "If it be," the Queen insists, with high pettish tones, "why seems it so particular to thee?" To which Hamlet answers from the deeper music of his sorrow,

> Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.
> 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
> For they are actions that a man might play:
> But I have that within which passeth show;
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

"Seems, madam! nay it is." It is not the things that seem but the things that are; not the actions that a man might play, but the sincerity within which passeth show, that give to literature and its oral interpretation the deeper meanings and satisfactions. It is this sincerity within that the interpreter should seek to find for himself and to awaken in others.

The problem of revealing one's sincere and inner self to others through oral interpretation, in such a way that they have awakened within them similar thought experiences, is not the simple process of handing over what one has picked out of a book. It is not a material transfer, like the sale of canned goods. It is a process that causes thought, living in the interpreter, to live in the constructive intelligence and creative imagination of those who listen to the interpreter. It is a process that causes similar expressional impulses to vibrate together in the interpreter and the listeners; but to vibrate with ever changing significance and intensity, like the rise and fall of waves in a storm, or the shifting colors of a sunrise. While the listeners remain audibly still, they could at any moment break into audible speech. In oral interpretation at its best each listener becomes an interpreter under the influence of the interpreter, just as the interpreter becomes an author under an author's influence. But the interpreter also becomes a listener. If at any moment he should stop his uttered speech, he could hear the uttered speech, not only of listeners present, but of a multitude of listeners far away yet near in space and time. At its best the thought experienced in oral interpretation, although intensely personal, becomes universal; so that speaker and listeners feel their individual experiences blend in a sympathetic rapport, and partake of the universality of human life.

Thought is always changing like life itself. Printed language cannot fix it. Even the words and tones of speech cannot fix it, although creative speech can reveal it more completely than print. Speech at its best can suggest to others more than print at its best; because speech is an organic living process while print is a mechanical device to record this process. Yet the interpreter with even the finest powers of living speech should not imagine that he can fix the thought for his listeners. He should not presume to think for an audience, but he should seek to be one with his audience thinking along common lines. It is true that the interpreter should be the leader in thought; that very much depends upon him, and especially upon the way in which he expresses himself; yet he should not assume the whole burden of thinking. His problem is to start with himself as a germinal center of thinking, and by the stimulating power of speech to surround himself as quickly and intimately as possible with a company of thinkers,

thinking with him along similar lines. These listening thinkers, by their physical, attentiveness, by the expression on their faces and in their eyes, and by the silent telepathy of their own thinking, help to build up, in harmony with the interpreter, a community of inner-life experience in which both speaker and listeners find common possession and pleasure.

The oral interpretation of literature implies a speaker-audience situation; a public rather than a private one. There is company in the home. This means that each individual concerned in oral interpretation, either on the platform or in the audience, is in the presence of strangers, more or less, and is subject to the inhibiting as well as the stimulating power of their presence. The speaker, however, feels this power more intensely than the listeners, for many eyes are focused upon him and many ears are open to his words. If this presence of others makes him think too much of himself, of the clothes he wears, the gestures and movements he makes, the words he uses, the tones he utters; if under the inspecting eyes of many he inspects himself; if he is too much concerned with what others think of him or will report about him; if he is afraid to be true to his inner best—then the presence of others engulfs him. Then he cannot concentrate and create. He cannot think at his best. He tends to speak "a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong." His speech-noises come, but the inner realization that should be back of them is lost in mental fog. The speaker-audience situation tends to destroy him. The only way he can save himself is to return to himself; to be as it were alone with his best self, even in the presence of others. Except he be willing to look within himself for his life he cannot find it. What he finds in others is their opinion of his thought-mask put on for their company.

When one is alone there is apt to be less of the spoilt-child in him, and more of the simplicity and sincerity of an unobserved child at play. When he is alone his instinct of social self-defense, and his desires to be seen, and to show-off in an attractive and favorable way, have no direct stimulus to action. Of course, it is hard for some individuals to be alone even when they are apart from others; for their mental habits are too largely controlled by social considerations. Their standards of values, their motives for conduct, and their measures of truth are based on the actions and opinions of others. Their

thought life is socially controlled. They are rouge-pot folks, even in the person of politicians and business men. The interpreter who thinks chiefly of the reactions of his audiences, or of his press reports, past, present, or to come, will have difficulty in being with himself long enough to find his own life. Consequently he will have nothing significant to bring to the social public, hungry to find its own life. There is a social, and an individual consciousness. The social at its best is guided by the worthier opinions of others; the individual at its best is guided by an inner harmony with everlasting truth. It would seem easier for the individual to be most truly himself when he is alone.

Nevertheless, it is possible for an individual to be most truly alone—most completely in harmony with the everlasting best within him, in a speaker-audience situation. The invigorating power of this public environment may focus and purify his personal thinking, intensify his concentration, clarify his vision, and liberate the creative activities of his mind. The speaker-audience situation may lift an individual up so that he catches a vision of his latent larger self. It may give him a motive and responsibility for making his own thought truer and more universal. This speaker-audience situation in oral interpretation may prove the way to the richest realizations of the life that literature can awaken.

In a certain sense when an individual is alone with his best, either by himself or with an audience, he is in the presence of a universal audience—in the presence of a listening truth and goodness from which he does not wish to escape. This presence inspires him. There is always a universal voice to which listeners may listen; and there is always a universal listener to whom an individual may pour out his innermost life, unrestrained by fear of petty and temporary opinion. This unhampered pouring out of the true self may be called self-revelation. This is not an asserting of self, but an escaping of the inner essence of life. It is the clear, free singing of the human soul in harmony with its own best self. The finest creations of literature spring from this spirit of self-revelation, and the most satisfying experiences in oral interpretation partake of this same spirit.

The development of self-revelation is perhaps after all the central problem in oral interpretation. Self-revelation is the main way to

the latent abundancies of inner-life experience, as these are stimulated by printed literature. It gives to oral interpretation its lifting and its invigorating satisfactions. It burns the sham out of literature, and strips pretense from life itself. It is the heart of the best self-expression, and the essence of the best communication. It puts interpreter and listeners most intimately together, yet most intimately alone in the presence of the universal voice and ear. It gives oral interpretation its larger truth and vision. It makes goodness a personal experience. It "turns, as the soul knows how, the earthly gift to an end divine." The spirit of self-revelation gives joy to the memory, strength to the imagination, wealth to the insight, rich sensitiveness to expression, freedom to communication, and vigor to the whole mind and being of the interpreter. The development of the unhampered pouring-out of the true self, both in speaker and listener, is the central problem in the oral interpretation of literature.

PART II

NOTIONS AND IDEALS IN ORAL INTERPRETATION

In the "Idylls of the King," as Tennyson has given us this story, we hear Queen Guinevere, the stately, sinful queen, after her last meeting with King Arthur in the holy house at Almesbury, cry out in her anguish:

> Ah my God,
> What might I not have made of thy fair world,
> Had I but loved thy highest creature here!
> It was my duty to have loved the highest:
> It surely was to my profit had I known:
> It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
> We needs must love the highest when we see it,
> Not Lancelot, nor another.

To Queen Guinevere, though "late, so late," there came the realization of a truth that may well be applied to the oral interpretation of literature. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." It is our duty, profit, and pleasure, not only to love the highest that we see, but also to keep our eyes open in order that a higher highest may be seen. Relative failure in oral interpretation, as in many other things, comes not so much from lack of desire to love the highest as from lack of knowledge of what the higher highest is. Failure is not so often a matter of weak motive, as of inadequate understanding and vision. If this is true, then in undertaking systematic and serious education in oral interpretation we should try to see more and more clearly some of the fundamental ideals of excellence in this field of experience.

That there are various levels of worth in anything we undertake is a fact easily understood; but only as we recognize and move towards higher levels do we find the more abundant satisfactions to which life is entitled. That it is possible to move towards lower levels of worth is also evident. The trend of any set of experiences may be either up or down. In oral interpretation there are four laws of upward trend. First, there is the law of higher motive: we must want to know and follow a better way. Second, the law of intelligence: we must recognize differences between the lower and higher

levels of worth, and must see clearly the ideas and ideals that mark the highest levels. Third, the law of opportunity: we must have a chance to work towards higher levels. Fourth, the law of industry: we must have energy, persistence, and patience in pursuit of the highest ideals. Let us assume that the first and fourth laws are active within us; that we want higher excellence in oral interpretation, and that we are willing and able to work for it. Let us also assume that the third law is operative; that an organized educational opportunity is before us to guide and supplement our efforts. If these assumptions are correctly made, then the second law, the law of intelligence, is the one to which we should give our chief attention. We need not only to understand more and more plainly the difference between inferior and superior worth in oral interpretation, but also to see with increasing conviction the ideals back of the highest worth. Such ideals come slowly through changing conceptions, growing out of observation and practice in oral interpretation. It is neither easy to explain nor to grasp these ideals in quick exposition on a printed page like this. We may be satisfied if at the end of a fairly long period of study we find ourselves able to discriminate more easily and wisely between the lower and higher levels in oral interpretation, and if we find within ourselves a kind of divine discontent with the cheaper and more tawdry practices in oral interpretation, and a kind of divine liking for the richer life experiences of literature, and a kind of divine pleasure and power in interpreting these experiences for others. As a means to this end let us consider further some of the notions and ideals of worth in oral interpretation.

In the beginning it may be well to stop long enough to realize the fact that good oral interpretation of literature and good silent appreciation are not the same thing, and that there is no essential conflict between them. Each has its worth and its work to do. There has been much useless and misleading controversy over the relative value of oral and silent reading; just as "debaters" of old used to controvert in vain over the relative greatness of Washington and Lincoln. Men who have believed themselves to be progressive educators have pointed out the weaknesses in oral reading, and belittled its value, in order to emphasize the worth of silent reading. They have called attention to the relatively limited quantity of oral reading

compared with silent reading, in order to prove that silent reading should have the time of the elementary schools in place of oral reading. They have tried to make Washington seem small in order to make Lincoln seem great. All of this fruitless controversy has come from the false notion that oral reading and silent reading are merely different methods of reaching the same results and the same values. Conclusions have been based upon false assumptions. Failure to see that a second thing has a different value from a first thing has made the first thing seem valueless. Both Washington and Lincoln were great Americans in their own way, living in different times and with different problems to face. Why then try to argue about their relative greatness, when greatness is not one and the same thing in different cases? Why try to argue about the relative beauty of a diamond and a dew drop? Both oral and silent reading have their uses and their values. Both have their weaknesses. Excellence in both is needed. But the chief reasons for this need are not the same in both cases. Here are two important problems in education and not one.

Good silent reading is needed as a tool for the rapid extraction of information from print, and as a protection from the time-wasting power of print. We live in a world of print, from advertising signs and newspapers to weekly magazines and books of information. Most of this flows from the forest into the wastebasket; in at one eye and out at the other. Some of it satisfies a passing news curiosity and knowledge desire. We want to know what's going on. Rapid and skimming silent reading habits are needed to find the cream of daily print, where cream arises. Good silent reading habits are needed in our search of quantities of print for things we want, and in our academic struggles with numberless pages of assigned reading.

On the other hand, good oral interpretation is needed as a key to the life experience in great literature; as a way to the pleasure and power of enriched comprehension and liberated expressional sensitiveness; as a source of the most abundant personal identification with the great experiences suggested in literature, and a means of leading others quickly and directly into these experiences. Good oral interpretation deals with problems of quality, not quantity in printed thought. It is needed for the intensive creation of thought stimulated

by literature, while good silent reading is needed for extensive contact with facts, notions, information, and diverting mental pastimes recorded in print. In silent reading speed-in-getting is important, while in oral interpretation time-to-think is important. Silent reading is something like a big reception where we see many people, shake hands down the line, sometimes even in kid gloves, and where we widen our range of acquaintances, and feel a common association with others of our class. Oral interpretation is something like a hearthside visit through long winter evenings, where we learn to know the hidden worth of friends. There is pleasure in going to a reception and feeling the touch of many people, besides it is often a social necessity. There is pleasure in sitting long by the fireside with a friend. Rapid silent reading properly used should put us in contact with many thoughts, some of which should bring us knowledge, wisdom, and intellectual pleasure. Good oral interpretation should germinate within us, as interpreter or listener, deep thought experiences, some of which should bring us purity of emotion, sincerity and richness of reflection, surety of conviction, wealth of human interest, warmth of human sympathy, breadth and depth of insight into life, keenness and sensitiveness to the beauty and pleasure of oral language, and freedom and power in self-expressive communication.

Good silent appreciation and good oral interpretation when applied to literature have as a common object, a clear, intense, personal realization of thought suggested by the printed literature. This takes time in either case, and probably as much time for the same quality of realization in silent as in oral interpretation. It may be that the highest realization of the thought may be more quickly reached by oral interpretation than by silent interpretation. But silent reading applied to literature is individual in its end, while oral interpretation is social. Good oral interpretation begins where good silent interpretation stops. It extends and enriches the individual realizations of good silent interpretation by the act of expressing these realizations for others. Good oral interpretation involves more than good silent interpretation, because it uses the whole being in the act of communicative self-expression. It involves a clear revelation of the thought to others at the instant the thought is being realized by the interpreter. Both silent and oral interpretation face the fundamental

problem of thought-getting under the stimulus of printed symbols, but oral reading faces the additional problem of thought-giving through the stimulus of spoken language and physical expression. Both silent and oral interpretation must face the mechanical character of print and the dangers of mechanical thought habits that print tends to develop; but oral interpretation of literature may escape from the mechanics of print when the literature ceases to be print in a book or in the memory, and becomes a part of the spontaneous thought-memories of the interpreter. This suggests that good oral interpretation may be the best means of reestablishing the spontaneous thought habits and speech habits that are upset by the mechanics of print.

A second notion worth consideration is this: good oral interpretation of literature means more than ordinary reading aloud from the printed page, even when the printed page is the record of great literature and the reader is an adult who has learned to read in the usual way. Reading aloud as commonly thought of and practiced in the schools has confined itself chiefly to the early grades, and has concerned itself for the most part with the problem of recognizing and pronouncing printed words. It has been just a part of the learning-to-read process, the end of which has been the ability to get meaning from printed symbols. In its earlier stages oral reading has been little more than labored and mechanical pronunciation as an outward sign of labored and mechanical recognition of printed symbols. Reading out loud has been used by the teacher and the class as a means of telling the readiness and accuracy with which a child recognizes printed words and gives them their formal pronunciation. By means of such oral reading the teacher knows when to help the child in recognizing and pronouncing words. By means of such oral reading the teacher may examine the elementary speech sounds and the voice of a child, and try to correct and guide the speech habits; although this is not the usual object of oral reading.

Every child who reads had to learn to read, that is, to recognize the established print symbols of a language, and to associate meaning and sounds with these symbols. This learning process at first is a painful struggle. The black marks on the printed page have no natural or inherent meaning for the child. They are not even interesting as marks. The child has to learn to recognize their form,

their grouping in a word; to associate the speech sounds of the language he uses with these marks; and to associate the marks with the ;meanings he has picked up by experience. Meaning and speech are things of the child's experience, but print is a secret, conventional code which he can learn only from others, as he learned his speech. This code is made up of letters representing elementary speech sounds. These letters put together in a row from left to right spell words. These words spaced from each other, arranged in order from left to right, and in rows from top to bottom, and properly capitalized, punctuated, and paragraphed, stand for thought flow. There are only twenty-six letter symbols to learn in English, and approximately forty-three elementary sounds, but there are thousands of words and numberless combinations of words in thought flow; so that when the child has learned to read in the ordinary sense he is really just beginning to learn to use the print code as a means of stimulating and guiding his thought. The meaning he gets from his first reading of print is apt to be a weak, impersonal, mechanical type of meaning, mixed up in its significance with spelling, punctuation, pronunciation, and the mechanics of eye movement over the page. His thought is a pseudo thought. In its larger sense learning to read is a lifelong process. The reading aloud that a child does in his first grapples with the print code is usually far removed from the spontaneities of speech that characterize the normal thought experience of a child. Let us examine this point.

If a child at a window sees a dog in the yard and expresses his knowledge of the fact in speech, he does not say, "I—see—a—dog," as he would read it aloud from the space and time uniformities of a printed page. He does not experience the rhythmic hitches in breathing that slow or uncertain recognition of printed symbols produce in him. He does not experience the shifting eye movement, the broken focus of attention, and the interrupted growth of concentration and climax, that the mechanics of the printed page force upon him. If he is a normal child, he is mentally alive and free in his whole being. His thought life and his self-revelation in speech are not forced into the straight-jacket of print. His first bad habits in mental and speech stammering have not been fixed upon him by the practice of pronouncing sentences, word after word, and line after

line. The child as he looks from the window does not say, "I—see—a—dog," uttering each word uniformly, distinctly, correctly, completely. The uppermost thing in his experience is not print, but the sight of a dog—a living, moving, interesting thing; and if the child has learned by experience to recognize a dog by the sound-name, dog, that name itself breaks quickly from his lips, and the rest of the sentence is only half uttered or implied. There is no false grouping of word sounds, no broken rhythm of thought.

As a child progresses in the process of learning to read, his difficulties in recognizing the printed forms become less and less and his readiness in pronunciation grows greater. Because he can recognize and name words with greater ease and rapidity, he can give more of his mind energy to the discovery and experiencing of meanings. However, he is still hindered in his thought life in reading silently or aloud from the printed page by the inherently mechanical character of print itself. He is still tied up to a mechanical eye movement from fixation to fixation, and from line end to line beginning; a movement that is incompatible with the natural continuity and change of eye direction and focus, in spontaneous and creative thought. In other words, the very necessity of recognizing by the outer eye the printed words, no matter how skillfully done, constitutes an interference with the natural focus of visual and mental perception. This perception-focus of the eye and other sense organs is the basis of attention, and of the clearest inner perceptions of memory and imagination. For this reason the highest excellence in oral interpretation can never be realized when the eye movements of the interpreter are controlled by the printed page; either directly by the presence of print, or indirectly by a memory of printed form.

Print is not thought any more than a cross is Christ. One may suggest the other, but they are not the same thing. Print must fade from the background of consciousness before thought can come fully to its own. This is true in silent as well as oral interpretation of literature. This does not mean that high levels in oral interpretation may not be reached in reading for others with the book in hand. High excellence can and should be attained. In fact good reading for others from printed literature should be the rule rather than the exception among educated people. But such reading demands training in aware-

ness, and skill in the use of printed literature. It means advanced re-education in oral reading. It means the development of an eye control that will allow the largest escape from the printed page. It means a large degree of liberation of thought in spite of the printed stimulus of thought.

It is relatively easy to read in the ordinary way, that is, to recognize and pronounce words, either silently or orally; and at the same time not know much about the thought of what has been read. Many a person has read a page while the mind has wandered far away. Reading in the sense of recognizing and naming words may become an automatic habit, like chewing gum. The eyes and even the speech organs may go through the movements while the consciousness is sleepy, or busy with other things. It is easy to go through the motions of reading while the creative thinking activity is dull or wandering. One does not have to think much in order to follow the page with the eyes, or even to pronounce the words in succession.

Thought, especially when it is strongly creative and rich with imagination, takes time—more time than is needed for the eye to recognize the word forms, or the voice to name the words. For this reason the printed page generally offers words to the eye and to the pronunciation too rapidly for the mind to work upon them. For example take Tennyson's "Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the western sea," or Hamlet's "To be, or not to be, that is the question." Take any great literature, and the eye movement over the printed page, and the speech movement in pronunciation easily outrun the creative action of the mind in the majority of cases. Only now and then, if ever, will the eye movement and the pronunciation movement be too slow for the movement of creative thinking. They are generally too uniform for creative thinking. For good oral reading from the book the interpreter must learn to check his eye movements and pronunciation impulses so that they fit in most nearly with the pausings and onrushings of thought. He must learn to take time to think. This calls for awareness and skill in overcoming not only the speed with which print presents itself to the eye, but especially the deadly uniformity. This calls for education that will help protect the child from the bad influence of learning to read, and will train the older child and the adult to think more spontaneously and creatively with

the printed page in hand. With proper education high levels of excellence in reading aloud from the printed page may be attained. Nevertheless, oral interpretation cannot be at its best until the interpreter can escape from the presence and specific memory of the printed page. As long as the outer eye is busy with print, or the memory with lines on a printed page, the inner-life experience cannot know the sweet and low sounds of the wind of the western sea.

It should be more generally evident, then, that oral reading as it is completed at about the fourth grade, or as it is eliminated almost entirely in a "silent-reading school system," is in no sense a sample or a fair beginning of good oral interpretation of literature. In fact oral interpretation in order to be good must correct many poor speech and thought habits that early reading, both oral and silent, tends to fix upon the adult. While good oral interpretation of literature is usually a matter of adult re-education, good oral interpretation should begin even before oral reading is supposed to be finished.

A third notion concerning oral interpretation that should be clearly understood is this: good oral interpretation means much more than formal technical skill in vocal and physical expression, and in platform behavior or speech habits. A bow may be perfectly executed yet perfectly meaningless. A word may be perfectly pronounced, according to the most scholarly phonetic standards, and yet be perfectly colorless in thought. A voice may have the qualities of formal excellence, and yet be empty of rich inner worth. Inflections may obey all rules, pausings may be deliberately worked out, speech diction may satisfy the fussiest ear, recognition and calling of words may be distinct and certain, the book may be "properly" held and the body "properly" groomed, the chest may be up and the body erect, the gestures may out-grace the Greeks, the voice may be round and orotund—fat with tone; the fortissimo and pianissimo may be executed as indicated, the crescendo may be perfectly worked up and the diminuendo perfectly worked down, and yet all this—how far removed from the essence of good oral interpretation! how pitiful and ridiculous in the light of the abundant inner-life experience that oral interpretation should create in the interpreter and cause to live in the lives of those who listen! Formal technical skill as a thing in itself is not the basic source of good oral interpretation. There can be good oral

interpretation without it. Better a thin nasal voice, and a large sincere soul, than a large voice, and a shallow soul; for the imagination of both interpreter and listeners will compensate for much frailty in the flesh if the spirit rings true.

Nevertheless, no interpreter, no matter how full he thinks his soul, can afford to be proud of a thin or nasal voice, or of a big and orotund voice, and neglect to improve his speech habits and his powers of vocal expression. Many students of oral interpretation have good insight but poor equipment to reveal this to others, just as many have good equipment and poor insight. Very few can afford to ignore their need of greater expressional sensitiveness, responsiveness, and communicating power, even when their equipment is naturally good. If insight is abundant enough, seldom if ever is the voice and the flesh sufficient to meet the need for adequate communication. The effort to perfect communication should go on, but always in response to enlarging and perfecting insight. The best in the voice and in physical expression should be sought and used, not as a superficial accomplishment, but as a phase of insight and a part of soul. For, "where is the use of the lip's red charm, the heaven of hair, the pride of the brow, the blood that blues the inside arm, unless we turn as the soul knows how, the earthly gift to an end divine."

Technical skill in voice and action should be turned to the end divine. The danger lies in formal technical training dissociated from unfolding abundance in inner life experience. Practice on formal actions, or emotional tones, such as a supine gesture or tone color, without the impulse and intelligent motive that should be a part of these, tends to develop technicians in oral interpretation—clever people, always half-conscious of the tricks of the trade, and always tempted to pull the strings of puppet emotions. The development of expressional power in oral interpretation comes best as an intelligently directed result of a need for adequate expressional power. "I would that my tongue could utter the thoughts that arise in me," is the motive force that gives the tongue its truest power.

The creative appreciation of life as suggested by great literature, and the sincere personal expression of this for others should by this act liberate and perfect the powers of expression. Just so should consciously liberated and intelligently perfected powers of expression

enrich the insight into life. As Browning puts this philosophy, "Nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul." If this is true, then the development of excellence in oral interpretation should not be thought of as a problem in technical training on the one side, and the growth of insight on the other; but as a problem in the fuller realization of the latent, harmonious possibilities of the whole man. It is, therefore, neither necessary nor wise to spend weeks and months trying to perfect speech habits, vocalization, and action apart from the act of oral interpretation. Nor is it wise to spend months trying to perfect insight apart from the act of expressive oral interpretation. The chief point for the student of oral interpretation to remember is that mere skill in voice and action is not the essence nor the end of good oral interpretation. When a student of oral interpretation finds himself "all dressed up with no place to go," when he is long on voice and action and short on communicated insight, it is time for him to search again for the essence of worth in oral interpretation.

In this connection it may be well to understand that good oral interpretation of literature does not depend upon a technical knowledge of psychology, anatomy, phonetics, physics, or even the theory of music or of oral expression; any more than the creation and appreciation of poetry depends on a knowledge of scansion or poetics. Some knowledge of vocal quality, force, pitch, and time, and some knowledge of theory of action may serve as a basis for self-criticism and the instruction of others, but on the whole the main part of such knowledge on the part of the interpreter or the listener is not essential to good oral interpretation. In fact there is a danger that technical knowledge may interfere with the mental focus and creative intelligence needed in oral interpretation; just as scansion may interfere with the appreciation of poetry. The interpreter who is filled with technical and theoretical knowledge may find it difficult to escape from this in the act of oral interpretation. He may, by long association with technical knowledge and impersonal theory, acquire an analytical habit of mind that will lessen such excellence in oral interpretation as he may once have had. The listener who is technically-minded is apt to be a hypercritical listener, unfitted to find and enjoy abundant inner life experience under the influence of the interpreter.

An audience of speech critics is apt to be a poor audience to bring out the best in oral interpretation. Few interpreters can do their best before such an audience. Such an audience does not cooperate fully in the creative thinking which literature should stimulate. In their minds is a house divided against itself, part slave and part free. Their participation in the pleasures of thinking in harmony with the thoughts that the literature suggests is constantly interrupted by their technical information.

Technical knowledge of the theory of expression, psychology, anatomy, phonetics, physics of sound, and similar fields of study, is interesting as a thing in itself, just as astronomy, and history, and chemistry are interesting; but we should not look for much of a transfer of this knowledge into excellence in oral interpretation, any more than we expect higher mathematics to serve as a mental discipline for history or philosophy. As far as the development of good oral interpretation is concerned the basic needs are: plenty of natural human psychology in the form of common sense; plenty of eye alertness in the observation of speech habits and physical expression; plenty of ear sensitiveness to speech satisfactions; plenty of aliveness to human experience, in the form of sympathies and memories of physical states; plenty of imaginative insight; plenty of insatiable curiosity for the meaning of words; plenty of mental avidity in associating new ideas with old ones; plenty of faith in human worth, and patience with human weakness; plenty of warmth in human relationships; plenty of natural sincerity, and freedom from artifice; plenty of instinct for the eternal fitness of things. These needs are not met by the interesting technical knowledge of the structure of the larynx, the physics of sounds, the theory of acoustics, the science of phonetics, the study of psychiatry, the analysis of pitch changes, and many other interesting subjects for investigation, in every way worthy by themselves but of doubtful value in the development of excellence in oral interpretation.

It should be remembered that there are two totally different aspects of study in oral interpretation. One is the knowledge or theory aspect, in which oral interpretation is thought about but not experienced; the other is the participation, or experience aspect, in which pleasure and power in the act of oral interpretation is sought.

The participation aspect is the one that leads to excellence in oral interpretation; the theory aspect is one that may lead far afield into theories of physics, psychology, phonetics, etc. It should be remembered that as far as the development of good oral interpretation is concerned the theory aspect should not be formally or fully emphasized; and only such knowledge as is of immediate and practical value in developing good oral interpretation should be considered at the time the need for it arises.

A fourth important notion concerning good oral interpretation is this: good oral interpretation is much more than speaking a piece, giving a recitation, or rendering a selection. Somehow these familiar descriptions suggest inferior ideals and low levels of worth. They seem to bring to memory a grade-school exhibition, where timidity and awkwardness, hesitation and prompting, indistinctness or monotonous loudness prevailed, and where the best dresses and good behavior of excited children were of the chief interest. In speaking a piece the emphasis was on the speaker and the speaking, and not on the piece. The piece was just a means for the speaker to come before an audience and show his speaking virtues. Any piece would do, if it had sufficient opportunities for the speaker to show off. In rendering a selection the renderer and the way of rendering were more important than the thing rendered. The piece was chosen for its rendering possibilities. The important thing was to exhibit platform grace, vocal variety and volume, and other evidences of polish and technical skill. Many selections were written chiefly to give the impersonator a chance to change his voice and demonstrate his imitative powers, or for the reader to make onomatopoetic noises in the name of poetry. Many a simple narrative was mutilated for the chance to use gestures. Many a program was arranged in order to show off costumes and quick changes in make-up. All this may be diverting entertainment, like a trained seal or a clown at a circus, but it does not fit the idea of good oral interpretation. This whole notion of self-exhibition or the exhibition of personal skill or grace, is far removed from the essence of good oral interpretation.

It is all right to speak a piece at a lodge meeting, a church social, or on a grange program. There is no essential wrong in it, and there may be much innocent fun and foolery and homespun sentiment in

this practice. There may be much excitement and responsibility and thrill for the speaker and much kindly amusement at his expense, and many words of approval when he "has done real well." No one for a moment should ridicule homely human pleasures. Besides, sometimes a recitation may prove to be more than a recitation. There is always a chance that it may touch life richly and deeply, stir the imagination, and invigorate the intelligence of both speaker and listeners. The trouble with too many recitations is that they are given to make people laugh or cry. They are picked to amuse people or to work their emotions. The reciter has little or no creative experience as he speaks. He is just a memory-box turned on and running down. But even speaking pieces and giving recitations may be of much greater worth if the right motives and ideals are back of these practices. The inner worth of the piece must be given first attention. Whatever is in the piece should ring true. Even fun and foolery should ring true. Surely simple philosophy and sentiment should ring true. Especially should dramatic dialogue and narrative ring true. If the reciter cannot find his own truth-in-experience within the piece, he cannot hope that his audience will find a true experience.

Falsehood in some form is the first fundamental cause of inferiority in speaking, reciting, and interpreting. Falsehood exists first in the piece and second in the speaker. The reciter should be honest in his own thought experience, and in the way he tries to stir the thought life of others.

A third source of falsehood lies in the occasion. The spirit that calls for a recitation should be true; and the spirit of the occasion should be true to the call. There should be desire and willingness to play, laugh, cry, fool, think hard—whatever the occasion will truly bring forth. An audience that expects show and falsehood will encourage what they expect. If speaking pieces and giving recitations is to rise towards the levels of good oral interpretation it must seek first and last to be true; for truth is fundamental to good oral interpretation.

It should be evident that in good oral interpretation of literature, or in any form of public recitation, the purpose should not be to "practice expression," or to develop the "art" of rendering, as a polished tool to be used when, or if, occasion arises. Preparedness

may be a good thing in speech and in national defense, but polished guns are apt to be used without cause, and polished art in rendering is apt to polish itself for the sake of the polish.

The term art as applied to oral interpretation may give a misleading suggestion; for it implies not only something in which truth, beauty, and goodness are richly present as a direct personal pleasure of the mind, but also a skill in doing; a superficial polish in execution; an attained proficiency in working the puppets; from which the soul of things is separated. This idea is false to the best oral interpretation. Art as excellence in itself should be an incident in good oral interpretation—rather that its main end and motive. Developed expressional power as a thing in itself may be an important and valuable means of general personal culture, but in good oral interpretation it should be an incident and not the main objective. The aim in good oral interpretation is neither drill in expression nor art as an objective accomplishment.

Good oral interpretation of literature calls for the highest type of original and creative thinking. It is not essentially a thing of imitation, re-citation, or re-production. It is not a phonographic record of Tennyson or Shakespeare. It is not a copied argument or a purchased ready-made speech. At its best oral interpretation is as truly original and creative as any act of the mind. It involves all the ordinary problems of getting ideas and giving them to an audience; of finding and selecting materials, evaluating these, and offering them to others in a group. But the materials it deals with are more difficult to find than statistics, economic arguments, and the everyday processes of making and marketing things. Good oral interpretation may be a kind of salesmanship, but what it sells is not aluminum ware, nor real estate. Its materials are in the realm of imaginative insight, emotional identification, understanding of the simple and subtle experiences of life, as these are suggested by the greatest thinkers in literature. Its content is more intensely personal, more strongly self-expressive, than discussions in more common forms of public speech. It involves in its presentation to an audience, a continuous blending and balancing of the spirit of communication with the spirit of self-expression. It involves the communication of moods, emotions, sensual experiences, memories of physical states that have been, and

alivenesses in physical states that are. It involves the communication of such materials of memory and imagination as may be found in the following warmly sympathetic reflection on the young men who died in the World War:

> These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
> Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
> The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
> And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
> These had seen movement, and heard music, known
> Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
> Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
> Touched flowers, and furs, and cheeks. All this is ended.

Such is the material that good oral interpretation deals with, and such material calls for the highest exercise of creative intelligence, and the highest excellence in public speech.

Because of the rich and varied nature of the food for thought in oral interpretation, the demands that oral interpretation makes upon creative imagination, sympathetic insight, sensitiveness in discrimination, variety, power, and charm in expression, and upon clearness and completeness of communication, is greater than the demands in speech-making, debating, preaching, and similar forms of public speech. Consequently, good oral interpretation of literature serves directly and unconsciously as one of the best means of drawing out the latent creative thinking possibilities, and the latent expressional reserve powers needed in all forms of speech. Many an effective debater has found the greatest sources of his effectiveness through the practice of good oral interpretation.

With these general notions of good oral interpretation before us let us consider more specifically some of the ideals from which we may hope to get a clearer vision of the highest in oral interpretation. Many of these ideals have already been suggested, and will need only to be recalled at this time. Many of these ideals overlap and blend, but out of them as a whole we should get at least a general impression of the essence of excellence in oral interpretation.

IDEALS

First, there is *the ideal of escape from the printed page.* As long as thought is tied to the mechanics of print it will lack the spontaneity of a living, changing experience. As long as eye movements are controlled by print, the basic perceptions in thinking will be disturbed.

Then there is the *ideal of escape from formal memory.* Memory is a natural aspect of thought. We remember faces, and handshakes, and kind words; we remember music and moods. We can also remember printed words, and lines, and pages, and telephone numbers; because the things we see, even printed symbols, tend to fix themselves upon the inner eye. But in the oral interpretation of literature it is not memory of words and pages that we want. Therefore, words and pages should be looked at as little as possible. Quickly the printed marks and pages should fade away, and in their places should come the memories of things that have been, and of things that are. Memory is simply the living again in ever new form of the things we have known. If we know once, clearly and intensely, the thought-music of a piece of literature, that experience is remembered. It is ours. It belongs to us, and not to the printed page. If we recall this thought-music from time to time, it will fix itself upon us for a long time. Even after months and years, the original flow of the speech sounds and the thought will come back to us; like an old song; and something very like the original pulsations in nerve and flesh will live in us again.

The problem of memorizing the words of literature should be fundamentally a problem of clear, intense, personal realization of thought as it surges in the impulses of living speech. Printed symbols should not be memorized by the eye for oral reproduction. The printed page should be looked at as little as possible so that the outer eye may have a chance to focus itself in harmony with the inner eye. The literature should never be written and rewritten to memorize it. What the memory needs to feed on as it faces literature is not print, but first hand living experiences of the imagination and the creative understanding. Unless the imagination acts, the memory has nothing but print and impersonal suggestions of thought to memorize. Hence, good oral interpretation will not be possible.

Closely related to what has just been said is *the ideal of full intelligence.* Good oral interpretation is based upon intelligence. There must be clear understanding of the meaning of words in terms of personal knowledge and personal experience. There must be keen and vivid action of the imagination, and a quick intuitive insight into human thought and experience. There must be unerring dramatic instinct, ease in slipping into other people's places, and in seeing life through their eyes. There must be wealth of old knowledge and avidity in associating it with new, and in creating new experiences of the mind. In short, good oral interpretation is a healthy activity of a sound, sensitive, intelligent, full-capacity mind.

Where there is full and free intelligence we should find at work *the ideal of joy in thinking.* Thinking in oral interpretation should be a pleasurable experience, because the highest faculties of the whole man are at work. If the interpreter experiences *the ideal of personal creation of thought* he will also experience a pleasure in thinking. Just as a child finds pleasure in building things with his own hands so we should find pleasure in oral interpretation by making things in our own minds. The best oral interpretation is marked by a joy in mental exploration and spiritual discovery. When there are new and personal thoughts brewing interpretation is glad.

Joy in creative thinking depends to some extent upon *the ideal of concrete and vivid thinking.* Thinking that is general, that deals with general ideas and emotions, with virtues and vices in abstract form, with experiences that belong to everybody but to nobody, tends to reflect itself in general tone-volume and monotony of expression. There is but little impulse to variety in expression. Such general thinking does not satisfy our more sensitive tastes for things with specific qualities. We want ripe, red strawberries, and round, crisp, red radishes rather than gardening and agriculture. We want "Redheads in the cherry trees and beehives where you got to be so careful going by," rather than ornothology and apiariology. We need in oral interpretation constantly to return to our primitive, first-hand, sense-organs memories of experience; to our direct contacts with specific things.

The ideal of continuity of thought experience in space and time is an important one. In good oral interpretation there should be no

periods, ends of lines, nor zero point in the rise and fall of thought interest. Thought should be a continuous, ever-changing flow of life energy. If the literature has unity of living experience, there should be no sense of stopping in time or space. There should always be a sense of existing and moving in time and space, especially when the speaker is silent or seems motionless. Take for illustration Tennyson's, "Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the western sea, low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the western sea! Over the rolling waters go, come from the dying moon, and blow, blow him again to me; while my little one, while my pretty one sleeps." The thought experience here, if the oral interpretation is at its best, never stops changing and going on. It is always growing, or fading, or growing, always rising or subsiding, always pouring out itself towards its climax or regaining its power through relative rest. There is perfect oneness of experience, perfect concentration and focus of the whole being, perfect unconsciousness of the printed page or of formal excellence in interpretation. There are no studied pauses, no pre-arranged tones or intensities, no planned postures, no conscious knowledge of the diaphragm, the cricoid cartilage, or the afferent nerves. There is life, living richly, simply, continuously; yes, living uniquely, for there is no other thought experience the same as this in "Sweet and Low." In fact every good poem is unique and unified; and because of this fact, it is a continuous experience from beginning to end. When the oral interpreter takes off in such a poem he should refuel, if necessary, only in the air. His should be a non-stop, good-will flight.

There are several ideals that are related to the social nature of good oral interpretation. First of these is *the ideal of escape from personal fear.* Fear takes the joy out of flying. Fear is an unpleasant experience in any form; but fear of one's own possible weakness or failure is most deadening to one who would interpret literature for others. Fear drowns the inexperienced swimmer. He cannot trust himself to sink deeply enough into the water so that the water will lift him up. Lack of faith in one's own powers cramps and limits one who would interpret well. Self-doubt chokes him. He needs to find and trust his own true worth and to build up his faith in it.

The greatest fear that an interpreter has is the fear that comes

from facing an audience. Stage fright we commonly call it. *Escape from social fear* is an ideal that many find hard to realize in oral interpretation. This fear may come from natural timidity, or from highly sensitive self-preservation instincts—a kind of wild-animal shyness. It may come from the natural pride of individualism, and dread of ridicule—from an excessive concern about what others will think and say. It may be just an over-emotional flood caused by the mass stimulation that comes from many people. One person who can meet one other in personal combat is overwhelmed in the struggle with many. Stage fright may be dread of being found out, and hence a matter of personal fear. The development of a sense of transparent honesty in the light of infinite truth is the medicine for this cause of stage fright.

But whatever the cause of stage fright, escape from social fear is necessary to the best oral interpretation. To effect this escape one may try to build up physical ease and mastery; or try to care less for the approval or disapproval of others; or assume that this fear will wear itself out with practice and patience; or try to believe that stage fright is after all a source of power to be controlled and used, like fire or electricity—a natural resource. Perhaps the best way to escape this fear of self and of an audience is to seek refuge in the clear, intense, personal, and instant realization and communication of the thought at hand. This should get the minds of the speaker and the listeners away from themselves. The more quickly and completely this can be done the better the interpretation is likely to be. Get the mind happily at work making rich and continuous thought out of the literature under consideration, and let this thought pour itself out freely in responsive and expressive speech, and stage fright will disappear.

This fright is always worse before a speech because the mind is not occupied with instant and active realizations. Let the mind take as its philosophy, "sufficient for the moment is the interest thereof"; and the fear that comes just before a speech—the excess excitement that comes as one rises to face an audience—will be greatly lessened or disappear. If preparation is reasonably adequate the interpreter should cease to worry about telling an audience what he knows. As he is before an audience waiting for the time to begin

his speech he should try to put out of his mind all thought of what he is to do, and should listen to what is going on as though he was a part of the audience. He should not try to remember what he is to say first. The harder he tries to remember the less ready he will be to think in an easy and natural way.

At this point let us recall two important ideals that have been discussed: *the ideal of escape from sham,* and *the ideal of escape from the art or skill objective.* Genuineness, true ring, sincerity, mental and emotional honesty, and similar qualities are essential to good oral interpretation.

The ideal of submission needs explanation. For good oral interpretation there must be willingness on the part of the interpreter to turn himself over to the influence of literature, to free himself from the wilfulness of his own desire, and to go without resistance and with energy where the thought set loose by literature leads him. He must learn to submit willingly and completely to the power of literature. He must learn to know the satisfaction that comes from such submission; the ease of mind, and the joy of going on and on into far countries. He must learn to feel as Tennyson's "Princess" felt, "I strove against the stream and all in vain: let the great river take me to the main: no more, dear love, for at a touch I yield." The ability to yield at a touch, from one's striving to think, to one's spontaneous course of thinking under the suggestion of literature, brings the interpreter of literature into his own best thinking.

In order to submit one must first *disarm his prejudices and preconceived opinions* concerning a piece of literature. He must lock up most of his book knowledge concerning the author, and most of his critical information, favorable or unfavorable, concerning the writing. He should part company with his knowledge of literary forms and theories. He should be clean-handed and open-minded, leaving family prejudices and all their relatives behind. He should say, "Thy people shall be my people." He must for the moment leave the old tribe of mental habits and live with a new one. This is not always easy, for hardening of mind often comes early as a forerunner of mental death. Submission means plasticity and youth of mind, more than resignation of mind. Submission, as thought of here, is not a negative, self-repressive act; not bowed-head, beaten-

down mental slavery; but a positive, co-operating, invigorating act, that lifts the face and liberates the spirit. It is the act in which one loses his life in order to find it more abundantly. It is the act through which one leads others to lose their lives and find their larger selves in literature.

Closely associated with the ideal of submission is *the ideal of immersion.* One should feel the wash of thought below the forehead. Sprinkling may be good as a religious symbol, but immersion is essential to the act of experiencing literature. The interpreter and the listeners should be enveloped in the thought experience. This experience should surround and permeate each individual, and pervade the whole group. The interpreter should get in all over; and by the joy of this act should invite the listeners to get in too. Immersion as an ideal in oral interpretation means that the whole being is buoyant in thought. When this takes place there is eagerness to tell; for this kind of thinking is self-expressive and unselfish. It cannot be kept in and hidden. It breaks into speech and physical expression even when no one is near; but when others are near its eagerness to share itself is increased. This eagerness to share suggests several ideals that have to do with the relation of the interpreter to the listeners.

The ideal of clearness and completeness in communication is of first importance in the relation of speaker to audience. The full thought should be so distinctly and intelligibly expressed that the listeners may understand without physical or mental strain. Both ear and mind should get an unmistakable impression. This calls for good speech habits: ease and accuracy in articulation—articulatory agility; ease and purity in tone formation; ease and power in speech projection. It calls for ready ability to overcome the ordinary acoustic hindrances to good communication. It calls for good oral time-patterns, oral punctuations; and pitch, tone, and intensity variations that make sense as well as sound. In the reading of poetry, especially, is there a tendency to sing, to make pleasing sounds without rational sense—"a doleful song steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong, like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong." In fact some theorists on poetry seem to think that poetry is song; a kind of emotional howling, like the baying of a dog at the moon, in which the howler feels strongly but the listeners know

not why. While the best poetry reaches into the depths and mysteries of emotion, the first essential for its good oral interpretation is intelligible speech. The highest rationalism should pervade the deepest passion, just as the sincerest passion pervades the highest intelligence. This suggests another very important ideal, *the ideal of mental-emotional balance.*

We commonly think of thought as broken up into two parts, thought and emotion. We say that some thought is mental and that other is emotional; that some belongs to the mind and other to the feelings. This is a convenient notion for analytical purposes. While man is a complete whole his experiences and his manifestations of himself are varied. He has automatic, reflex, and physical states of which he is seldom or never directly conscious. His blood pressure changes, but he knows it only indirectly and faintly in the form of general states. His breathing grows deeper, or faster, or seems to stop, but he knows this as a state of aspiration, excitement, pleasure, suspense, fear, horror, etc. The moisture content in his eyes changes, and the opening between the lids grows greater or less, or the muscles of his face contract and relax, but he knows this as an experience of happiness, sorrow, eagerness, stupor, anxiety, peace, etc. These physiological states we call emotions. These physiological states always exist. They are always a part of life and thought; and are a very large and important part of the appreciation and communication of thought in oral interpretation of literature.

But man's life manifests itself in a more specific and conscious form of physiological states, which we call rational thinking. This thinking uses language. Objects, facts, and ideas are given names. Through these thought-symbols, objects and ideas are selected, put together, associated, compared, and classified; similarities and differences are observed; causes and consequences are noted. This thinking in language is associated with the automatic and reflex physiological states, and gives man an awareness of emotional experience. In good oral interpretation of literature there must always be a mingling of mental and emotional activity. This mingling is never in constant proportions. At one moment the rational consciousness may be most active, and at another moment the emotional consciousness may be in flood. This flow and ebb in mental and emotional activity should

be such in oral interpretation that the two are always harmonized and balanced; but with the rational activity always in control. No matter how powerful the emotion may be, the understanding and reason should be strong enough to match it and go with it as the dominant force. Emotion can never be too great if matched and guided by intelligence. In fact the very essence of great emotion is great intelligence. Perhaps the secret of great intelligence is great emotion in control. This idea of a balance between reason and motion is extremely important, especially in the oral interpretation of great poetic and dramatic states. Where the poetic and dramatic spirit is strong, the flood of general emotion—the upward surge of reflex and unconscious physiological states—is apt to sweep beyond intelligence and rationalism, and spend its force in devastating expression. Then we say that the roar of the voice drowns out the brains; the throes of the muscles strangle the intelligence. Probably the most common weakness in oral interpretation comes from the failure of the intelligence to match and lead the liberated emotions. Great poetic and dramatic literature, because of its large emotion, calls for more than commonplace intelligence to match it. The oral interpretation of such literature fails, not because it is over-emotional, but because commonplace intelligence does not rise to meet it.

But there is another side of this matter of mental-emotional balance. Good oral interpretation of literature is impossible as a cold mental activity; as an abstract, impersonal speculation. Literature is life; and life, living, must have physiological states. The automatic and reflex states of the flesh must meet the classifying and reasoning activities of the mind. Without strong emotion balancing the intelligence in oral interpretation, the intelligence destroys the essence of the literature. It freezes it to death. It embalms and buries great literature. The intelligence cannot be too great for the emotion when the emotion is strong enough to back it up and give it living power. This balance between mental and emotional activity is as satisfying as a rich oriental tapestry. The many colored threads of warp and woof run through the whole, some coming to the surface here and others there, making an ordered and pleasing pattern. Good oral interpretation is a balanced weaving of mental and emotional threads, so that the pattern gives large meaning and satisfaction.

Associated with the ideal of mental-emotional balance is *the ideal of reserve power.* Although communication in oral interpretation should be clear and complete, it should never be without reserve power. There should be stores of intelligence and emotion that are not used. The limit in communication should never be reached, for it is the suggestion of large unexpressed mental and emotional states that gives to oral interpretation its stimulating power. There should always be something for the intelligence and emotions of the listeners to create for themselves. Even though very much is communicated, if there remains no reserve of uncommunicated ideas and emotions, the speaker is like an empty water-cask, and the listeners like thirst-choked sailors on a salty sea. It is the unexpressed, back of the clearly and richly expressed, that gives to oral interpretation its greatest power.

In the relation of interpreter to listeners *the ideal of intimacy* is fundamental. Intimacy is a feeling of close, friendly contact between speaker and audience. A sense of physical separation disappears, and interpreter and listeners draw together in space and in mind under the influence of common thought and feeling. There is a force of attraction between them, a blending of themselves into a single state of sympathetic interest and mutual understanding. In intimacy the interpreter has the power of breaking down distance. Instead of trying to "get across" to an audience, he draws the audience across to him. In order to do this he must be free from egotism, haughtiness, prejudice, and other repellant qualities. Intimacy is the result of two people meeting each other more than half way. It is a hand-to-hand contact in the observation of a common idea; a shoulder-to-shoulder pressure against a common load. Intimacy implies mutual pleasure in being together in place, time, and spirit. This ideal of intimacy is suggested in Edna Saint Vincent Millay's lines, "O world, I cannot hold thee close enough. Thy winds, thy wide gray skies; thy mists that roll and rise; thy woods this autumn day, that ache and sag and all but cry with color; thy gaunt crag to crush; to lift the lean of that black bluff! World, world, I cannot get thee close enough." Closeness in sympathy, understanding, and experience is the essence of intimacy needed in oral interpretation.

With intimacy goes *the ideal of warmth.* A cold nature cannot enter into the richest life suggested by literature, nor can it reveal

this to others, even when the life suggested, is cold like that of the speaker in Browning's "My Last Duchess." The interpreter, like the last Duchess, needs to have a heart which to the cold individual seems, "too soon made glad, too easily impressed." Warmth implies capacity for happy interest in many things. The Last Duchess "liked whate're she looked on, and her looks went everywhere. Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, the dropping of the daylight in the west, the bough of cherries some officious fool broke from the orchard for her, the white mule she rode with round the terrace—all and each would draw from her alike the approving speech, or blush, at least." Warmth of nature in the interpreter opens the inner doors of literature. It "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The personal quality we call sympathy is a part of warmth and intimacy. Sympathy as an attribute of mind, like "the quality of mercy is not strained. It dropeth like the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath." There is no compulsion under which one who would interpret literature can be forced into sympathy with the life in literature and with the lives of those who listen to him. Assumed or sanctimonious sympathy will not satisfy the relationship between speaker and listeners. Only friendliness will beget friendliness; only trust will beget trust.

To intimacy and warmth should be added *the ideal of complete aliveness*. The whole being of the interpreter needs to be strongly sensitive and responsive to the wide ranges of emotion and thought that great literature suggests. There should be no dullness of sensation, no drowsiness of intellect, no paralysis of emotion, no missing experience that imagination should create. There should be ability to move the body, in any of its parts, quickly, accurately, significantly, and powerfully, in physical expression; but always with reserve energy under the safety control of intelligence. Aliveness in oral interpretation does not mean constant, wide, or meaningless motions. It should not be thought of as the nervousness of the old woman who lived in the shoe and had so many children that she didn't know what to do. Some times an interpreter has so many listeners he doesn't know what to do. He turns to this one and to that one with a busy eye, agitated and on the move, but hardly completely alive. Aliveness

is not general nervousness and excitibility; it is not a hen with a brood of young chicks. Complete aliveness often requires complete stillness, like a runner on his mark just before the crack of the gun. Aliveness is a compound of health in mind and body, of keen interest in all things as they come to the attention, of clear grip on ideas and feelings, and of alertness for activity in the whole being.

A very important ideal in its general influence upon the spirit in oral interpretation is the *ideal of abandon*. This ideal suggests confidence, fearlessness, glad liberty, joyous use of the mind in expression without care for personal consequences or public approval. There is in abandon something of the feeling that school is out; that the deadening load of personal responsibility for the preservation of the social order and the salvation of the world is lifted. The spirit of abandon leads the soul of the interpreter to sing like a lark in clear air and sunshine. It helps the interpreter to escape from "patterned garden paths" and the "stiff brocaded gown" that Amy Lowell talks about, and to say with the speaker in "Patterns," "I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths, and he would stumble after, bewildered by my laughter. I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on his shoes. I would choose to lead him in a maze along the patterned paths, a bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover, till he caught me in the shade, and the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me, aching, melting, unafraid." The rare essence of abandon could hardly be better expressed than in the spiritual joy, complete aliveness, trusting warmth, and pure open freedom from guilt and fear, that is suggested in the words, "aching, melting, unafraid." There is some of the same feeling in Wordworth's "This sea that bares her bosom to the moon." There are no secrets, no falsehoods, no fears between the placid bosom of the lake and the open shining of the moon. In oral interpretation there should be no secrets, no falsehoods, no fears, but a calm, glad, free expression of the spontaneous, natural, and creative activities of the whole mind.

The idea of abandon should not be misunderstood. While it implies verve and go, a kind of wild freedom in expression, it does not imply lack of self-mastery, or a moral riot. Rather does it mean power of thought and expression unhindered in the revelation of its

PART III

PREPARATION FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE may be thought of as the act in which an interpreter brings the fruits of his experience with a specific piece of literature to an audience, and tries to present these in such a way that the listeners get a large measure of experience similar to his own. The audience may be large or small, one or many, and the words of the literature may be read directly from the printed page, or may be given from memory. The things said are made up of the remarks of the speaker concerning the literature, and of the quotation of the literature itself. As a rule the quotation of the literature occupies the greater part of the time, but this need not be so. In interpreting an intensely rich lyric like Browning's "Life In A Love," or Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears" the speaker may well spend more time talking to the audience about the literature, giving them necessary information and moods for a fuller acceptance of the lyric, than in quoting the lyric itself. In all cases the interpreter should mix the spirit of the best extempore speaking with the spirit of the best expressive quotation. In this way the whole act of oral interpretation becomes in spirit an original speech in which the quotation is the thing of central interest.

Preparation on the part of the interpreter for a specific act of oral interpretation should be a process of discovery, searching, rehearsal, and growth; sometimes limited to a short period, but usually extending over a fairly long time, even months or years: for some of the best oral interpretation comes from long experience in interpreting the same literature. To this process of preparation the interpreter should bring his best concentration, his keenest intelligence, and his most prompt and active industry. In the conscious process of preparation he should be in good physical condition, so that his mind will work most clearly and actively. He should be as free as possible from interruptions. He should try to find a place where complete and sustained concentration is easy; where he can think and study at his best. He should remind himself that procrastination is the thief of time, and indolence the stumbling-block to excellence.

If he is already quite familiar with the literature, or perhaps knows

it by heart, and has "given it many times," his preparation consists, first, in trying to find new ideas and new mental experiences in this literature. He should let his mind create again the thought and moods of the literature, taking time here and there to reflect as he has never done before upon the thought suggested. He should allow these suggestions to breed new suggestions until the literature takes on a new meaning, and gives a new satisfaction in the joy of creative thinking. For example if he is thinking again over the words of Macbeth, "What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes. Will all great Neptune's ocean wash the blood clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red," he may get a new sense of the eternal futility of trying to wash out this deep human sin, even in the vast oceans of the world. Or he may come to realize that "No: this my hand" means his own hand, and his own life, and not a general hand: that it means my hand; my guilt, that is so deep-dyed and vast and unescapable that it will turn the green of all oceans into red—the red of blood. Or if he is thinking again on the words in Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," "Twilight and evening star and after that the dark," there may come to his imagination a new sense of the pure stillness, the subdued beauty, and the infinite calm and peace of the twilight and the evening star, that again and again throughout the ages have preceded the good of dark. He may feel a new sense of goodness in the mystery that comes with night, and therefore with death. Or suppose he is reading again from "Tears, Idle Tears. I know not what they mean, tears from the depth of some divine despair rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes, in looking on the happy autumn fields, and thinking of the days that are no more." There may come to him with new depth the wistfulness of sorrow that comes from happy harvest time. Like lights and shadows over a rolling landscape may come to him the divine despair of work finished, and the working time over. He may realize in the mellowing light of memory, the pleasure and the goodness of the days that are no more; realize this with a longing and a pathos that go far beyond what he has known before.

A great deal of the literature that an interpreter may well use for oral interpretation is old. That is, it is known to the interpreter and

to other people; known after a fashion but a fashion that is too often a superficial one. Tennyson's "Crossing The Bar," has been appreciated and loved after a fashion by thousands of people who have really experienced only a small part of the wealth that this lyric may suggest. Tens of thousands are acquainted with it but have never been touched by it. This same thing is true of all great literature, and of some less great. If this were not so there would be little need for oral interpretation. Insight into literature is not a fixed thing, hence anyone who would prepare to interpret literature he already knows should be humble-minded enough to know that he does not know it all. He should be eager to search anew for things he has not known, as well as to enjoy again the things he has known.

This searching-anew process in the preparation of familiar material keeps the mind of the interpreter from becoming fixed and stale, and enables him to bring to the act of oral interpretation a creative mind that will continue, even in the presence of an audience, to find, as by intuition, new meanings and new experiences. It will enable him to give the stimulation and inspiration that comes from an audience a chance to carry his thinking power beyond the point of greatest penetration possible when he is alone. An audience and a speaker together may create such a favorable condition for thinking that the interpreter will discover things that he would seldom or never find by himself. But preparation of a photographic rather than a creative habit of thinking will keep the interpreter from discovering much that he might learn in the presence of an audience.

The second thing that an interpreter should do in preparing familiar material is to cultivate a habit of expressional experimentation. He should try to taste old words in new ways. Habits of oral expression like habits of thinking tend to fix themselves on a specific piece of literature. The voice and action as well as the mind tends to get set. A general thought-voice-action pattern is inherent in any piece of literature, but the details that give the general pattern its life and richness are individual, and are subject to changes in any individual. As the interpreter speaks again to himself in rehearsal the familiar words, he should experiment now and then with new pausing, intensity, volume, pitch, purity, etc., and with the positions or movements of his hands or of his whole body. He may as an

experiment try to watch himself in a large mirror, and try to see if possible what he looks like in any specific bit of his expression. He may then try to adjust his looks to fit more nearly what he thinks they should be. To test what he is doing with his body and to keep himself physically alive and responsive to new ideas and moods, he may well experiment with different combinations of suiting "the word to the action and the action to the word." The purpose of this experimenting, however, should be to find a truer significance and satisfaction in the act of self-expression rather than new tricks of expression. The spirit of this expressional experimentation should be the spirit of discovery, and searching for expressional truthfulness and abundance. It should help to bring the interpreter to each repeated interpretation with a creating mind.

The stimulus of old ideas repeated in the same form and with the same meaning tends to become weaker, and to lose its power. The mind grows tired of the same experience. It loses interest. To it the same thing repeated in a mechanical way becomes "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable." The interpreter, therefore, should protect himself from fixed photographic thought and expression in the interpretation of a piece of literature. He should try not to be a phonographic record, even of himself. That is, he should try not to reproduce exactly what he has already experienced in interpreting a piece of literature, even if his interpretation has been exceptionally successful. He should make each act of oral interpretation a new one, rooted in the old, of course, but nevertheless new.

The freshness and repeated rebirth of thinking is even more important in oral interpretation than in other forms of public speaking, because the responsibility for the personal creation of thought is often greater in oral interpretation. Formal argument and impersonal facts do not depend largely for their vitality upon the creative activity of the mind.

Routine repetition of any form of thinking, whether the repetition of the same words in a piece of literature, or the repetition of the same set of ideas in an oft-used speech, tends to become half unconscious and automatic, like the inspection of gears in an automobile factory. Routine repetition tends to lessen the creative activity of the mind. Some changes in words and their order in sentences

usually helps to keep old ideas from becoming mechanical and automatic. Extempore speaking seems to make it less easy for repeated thought to become mechanical than does speaking from a manuscript or from memory. For this reason it is good practice in preparing a piece of literature for oral interpretation to do parenthetical and expansive extemporization in connection with, and in addition to the words that are used in the literature. It is good practice to put the thought in other words, to translate it into the experience language of the interpreter, and to dwell upon it in expanded statements. This thinking-between-the-lines will tend to give the words of literature new vitality and meaning, and will tend to prepare the interpreter for the freedom of extempore elucidation before an audience that is necessary for the best oral interpretation.

In this connection there is an interesting idea that should be pointed out. It is quite commonly believed that extempore speaking is inherently a higher activity in creative thinking than oral interpretation of literature; that when one selects and arranges his own words—makes his own composition, before or at the time of speaking, he is therefore experiencing a higher type of creative thinking—is using more gray-matter, than when he speaks the words of a piece of literature; that his own reasoning is an act of greater intelligence than his understanding of the testimony or authority of another. This is not necessarily the case. Even the reverse is often true. It is easily possible to create more richly while using the words of a piece of literature than while using what are commonly called one's own words. Originality of composition is of relatively little importance compared with the value of creative mental activity. An original verse or play is not necessarily marked by large creative mental activity. A good extempore speech does not necessarily nor usually involve a larger exercise of mental power than a good oral interpretation of a piece of literature. The point to see is this: words when repeated cease to be the same words if new meanings are associated with them. What seems to be the same words may be repeated and repeated with newly created meanings at each repetition. With these new meanings in old words come changes in the oral and living character of the words, which make the old words in essence new ones, with all the force and freshness of newly created language. The composi-

tion, although it looks old in print, is really new in living thought. The oral interpreter of literature cannot realize this too clearly in his preparation for oral interpretation. While using again and again the same printed words of a piece of literature he should seek to create new living thoughts which change old words into new ones that no print can record.

The words of a piece of printed literature and the words of the living thought stimulated by these are not the same words, even though they may seem to be. The words of printed literature remain fixed, but the words of living thought are always changing and are always new. The words the interpreter should prepare for oral interpretation are these changing words of living thought. He should get away from the idea of preparing words and sentences that are fixed, and should seek to prepare actively creative mental experiences, that may be depended upon to recur in their main details, but with new and changing freshness, and in language which in the printed literature seems to be fixed. In such preparation the process of memorizing ceases to be a matter of becoming word-perfect, and becomes a matter of such clear, intense, and personal realization of the thought in terms of the words of the literature that the recall of these words will come as an unconscious part of the recurrence of the thought.

What has just been said regarding the preparation of familiar literature also applies to new and less familiar literature, except that the preparation of new and less familiar literature takes one back to the earlier stages of getting acquainted with the literature, and of discovering its more obvious meanings and moods. In all preparation the first important work before the interpreter is to get a clear, intense, personal realization of the thought as it is being expressed for a real or imaginary audience. Let us consider this more in detail.

As one faces a piece of literature all uncertainty concerning the plain meanings of words should be cleared up, if this is possible. To this end a good dictionary and other helps, including a teacher, should be used freely; and the interpreter should hold himself responsible for the accurate and definite meanings of plain words. For example when he reads the following he should not be satisfied until he has a clear and specific meaning for the italicized words: "Or hear old

Triton blow his *wreathed horn.*" "I looked at last on the little red gate and the *well-sweep* near." "Its *irised* ceiling rent, its sunless *crypt* unsealed." "The *sedge* has withered from the lake." "The shriveled stalks of *goldenrod* are *sere* and crisp and white their flashing old *racemes.*" "By the lonely *cairns* I builded they will guide my steps aright." "The good souls flocked like *homing doves.*" "May there be no moaning of the *bar* when I put out to sea." "What to him are *Plato* and the swing of *Pleiades.*"

Literature is full of words whose plain meanings must be clearly and vividly understood if the preparation for oral interpretation is to be adequate. Vagueness and uncertainty should be cleared up with effort as painstaking as the careful translation of a foreign language. If one-tenth as much of the time spent in translating foreign languages was spent in digging out clear and specific meanings of words in our own language, power to think clearly in the oral interpretation of literature would be greatly advanced. The trouble is that reading in one's own language does not require much effort, if the reader is satisfied to skip over unknown words, or guess at their meaning, and get a general impression of the whole. This habit of guessing at meanings is so easy to form that the interpreter should force himself to look up every uncertain word. If he will do this he will find his power to think clearly and specifically in interpreting literature very much increased.

But to understand the plain meaning of words is not enough; for words are used in literature with hidden and allegorical meanings. Words whose plain meaning seems to say one thing are intended to say another. One cannot find these hidden meanings in a dictionary. He must search among his knowledge of human experience, and go deep into his own understanding of life. He must set his imagination stirring among his memories and his intuitions. For example, what does the speaker in "Annabel Lee" mean when he says, "It was many and many a year ago *in a kingdom by the sea*"? What and where was this kingdom and this sea? The answer to this question will influence the whole spirit and technique of the oral interpretation of this poem. What does the speaker in Tennyson's "As through the land at eve we went and plucked the ripened ears" mean by the words, *land, eve, plucked* and *ripened ears*? Is this an account of the

gathering of corn from the field at the close of day? Or is life itself like a day in the open country, and old age like the evening of day, and plucking of ripened ears like the enjoyment of the fruits of a life well spent? What does the speaker in "The Stirrup Cup" mean when he says "My short and happy *day* is done; the long and lonely *night* comes on?" It is evident that a right answer to such questions as these is vital to good oral interpretation; yet it cannot be found in a dictionary. To the experienced interpreter with sensitive insight these richer hidden meanings of words may come like a flash out of imagination and the abundance of life experience, but the less skilled and less sensitive interpreter may need to search, and wait, and search again, before the fuller flood of meaning comes to him. It should be perfectly evident that the fuller hidden meanings that a piece of literature may set loose in an individual cannot always be extracted quickly by main force, but must come out of the widening and mellowing experience of the mind. Nevertheless, the interpreter should be industrious to find out as quickly and fully as possible the hidden meanings that common words may hold.

In addition to understanding the plain and hidden meanings of words, the interpreter should work to understand vividly and concretely the pictures and other sensual experiences suggested by the literature. He should try to see things so clearly that if he were a painter he could put the essential spirit of the thing he sees in imagination, upon canvas in paint. For example as he reads the opening of "The Lady of Shalott" he should try to paint in his own mind a landscape of rare clearness and beauty, so vivid to him that as he looks at it the words Tennyson has used to describe it come spontaneously to his lips. "On either side the river lie long fields of barley and of rye, that clothe the wold and meet the sky; and through the field the road runs by to many-towered Camelot." With a vivid picture of this scene, clear in its details, creating itself in the imagination of the interpreter, the oral description of this picture will be free from the false grouping of words and the excessive rhyme which usually characterize the oral reading of these lines. But vivid pictures in this case depend upon detailed pictures suggested by the plain meaning of words. What is *barley,* and what is *rye,* as these grains are seen growing in the long fields? What time

in their growth is it? Sprouting time or harvest time? Neither is like the "Short, sharp emerald wheat" that the speaker in Browning s "Up at a Villa and Down in the City" sees. And what is *the wold?* And how do these fields meet the sky? What kind of a river valley is this? And what kind of a road runs by? How far away is many-towered Camelot? What and where is Camelot? How great is the visibility, or how hazy the atmosphere? The answer to many questions enters into the clear picture that the mind paints. The concreteness and vividness of this flow of pictures measures the fullness of the mind's activity. Just a general impression of beauty in this case is not enough for good oral interpretation. The composite picture described here is not words in a book, not a general smudge of color and lighting effects, but a vivid landscape, clear before the inner eye at the moment its changing details are observed and enjoyed. Literature is full of appeals to the memory of things we have seen, and to the unseen things that understanding and imagination can paint.

A clear understanding of the thought in a piece of literature involves not only plain and hidden meanings and vivid pictures that the inner eye paints, but also a clear understanding of other sensuous experience that the literature suggests. What for example do the italicized parts of the following mean in terms of flesh experience: "I gain the cove with *pushing prow* and *quench its speed* in the *slushy sand.*" "Not a *softness* anywhere about me. Only *whalebone* and *brocade.*" "*Laboring of the lungs* in that *close mist.*" "My *rosy children* and my wife, so *sweet to kiss,* so *fair to view.*" "The *rectitude* and *patience* of the *cliff.*" "His kisses fell *upon my eyes like dew* and *closed them.*" "O, that this too, *too solid flesh* would melt, thaw, and *resolve itself into a dew.*" Literature is full of such memories of physical states, and of appeals to our understanding and imagination to make these states vivid and clear in the mind. These states cannot be understood as general, or abstract ideas. They must be specific and vivid; not so much to the eye, the ear, or the nose, as to the sense of tension, strain, counterpoise, pressure, speed, heat, cold, etc., in the muscles or movements of the flesh. Clearness in understanding these sensuous states must come from intuition and reflection; from deep mental searchings into life experiences; or from the stimulating suggestions of someone who understands.

Then there are definite emotional states to be understood by the imagination if the thought is to be clear. These emotions in effect are sensuous states also, not easy to describe, but nevertheless states that may be definitely known. The interpreter should seek specific rather than general moods in the flow of thought. To illustrate, take these words: "The little toy dog is covered with dust, yet sturdy and staunch he stands." Here the word "dust" is symbolic of faded joy; of life loved and lost; and the emotion that comes to a climax in the word dust is the emotion of growing grief and gathering tears. But this emotion is wiped away in part by the growing complimentary emotion symbolized by the words *sturdy* and *staunch* and *stands*— the emotion of rising faith in the eternal tenacity of human love. Here we have side by side the depth of human sorrow and the certainty of human affection; grief and consolation hand in hand; though "the years are many and the years are long," yet "the little toy friends are true." If the interpreter fails to discover such contrasting and changing emotions his interpretation will lack clearness of understanding. Upon his face and in his voice will be that sameness or blankness of expression that tells of vague and uncertain levels of insight.

Let us take as another illustration the following: "I am singing to you soft as a man with a dead child speaks, hard as a man in handcuffs held where he cannot move." Here we have a complex mingling of all the tenderness and tears, all the awed and passionate affection, all the hushed hunger for communication of a strong man alone in the presence of his dead child; and all the firmness of defiance, all the bitterness of pent-up social injustice, all the cold irony of inexorable ignorance and insatiable wrong that a man in handcuffs may feel. This complex flow of emotion may be hard to analyze into all its elements in a way that satisfies, but the interpreter should go far enough to feel the distinct changes in his face and voice that are a part of this flow. He should go far enough to know that the emotion here is a complex and changing one; and he should understand clearly some of the contrasting human experiences back of this change.

In all of his efforts to get a clear understanding of a piece of

literature the interpreter should get back of his general moods and emotions to their more specific sources. He should seek in the midst of general feelings for the momentary experiences out of which these feelings come. He should work for a clear, discriminating analysis of specific states of emotion in the flow of thought. The need for such analysis could be illustrated indefinitely. All great literature finds its greatness in the variation and harmonious mingling of emotional states; and these emotional states have their sources in clear and concrete thought suggested by printed words. Failure to get a clear sense of specific changes in the flow of emotion is usually due to failure to understand the plain or hidden meaning of words, to see pictures vividly, and to remember distinctly physical experiences and states.

Again, for the interpreter to get a clear realization of the thought he must understand the situations and the general spirit in the literature. He should seek a satisfactory and definite answer for himself to such questions as: "Who is speaking in this piece of literature; to whom is this person speaking; in what surroundings,—where and when he is speaking; what is his dominant feeling, mood, or point of view; when and how does his spirit or point of view change; why does he speak?" Clear answers to such questions are not as simple as they may seem. It is never sufficient to say that the speaker is the author, or a mother, or an old man. Such answers are not specific enough. Seldom is the speaker in a piece of literature the author of that piece of literature. An author should be the creator of children of the imagination, each individual in itself, no one a copy of another. To say that Tennyson is the speaker in Tennyson's "Sweet and Low" is absurd. To say that the speaker is a mother is not sufficient, for *mother* is a general term around which widely differing life experiences may be woven. To say that the speaker in Shelley's "Threnos" is an old man does not go far enough, for *old man* might apply to the speaker in Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," yet the speaker is not the same in both poems. These general answers are often a start towards specific understanding, but they are not definite enough unless those specific elements in the life history of the speaker which are essential to the creation and appreciation of the literature are known. The essential elements in the life history

of the speaker in Shelley's "Threnos" and in Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" cannot be described by the term *old man.*

Who is the speaker in Holmes' "Chambered Nautilus"? "This is the ship of pearl, which poets fain sails the unshadowed main, the venturous bark that flings on the sweet summer wind its purple wings, in gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings, and coral reefs lie bare, where cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair. . . . ." Surely the speaker is not a bathing beach beauty with or without a modern education. Back of the life history of the speaker in this poem is a knowledge of classical mythology, natural science, and the arts of poetry, history and travel. Under what circumstances does this speaker speak? Surely not standing on the seashore on a pleasant day with a newly-found broken shell in his hand. This situation would probably make him too self-conscious to think as intellectually as he does. He is not standing on a platform before an audience trying to illustrate for them a lesson in moral philosophy. This would make him too purposeful to think as sincerely as he does. There is something of the purely reflective and imaginative in this poem that suggests a mind in its familiar study-room, introspective in the presence of a carefully bisected specimen of the chambered nautilus.

There is nothing more important to good preparation for oral interpretation than a keen and consistent analysis of the situations and moods under which the thought of the literature would most naturally be created. This phase of preparation is more fully discussed under the head of Written Analysis on page 85.

In working to get a clear, intense, personal realization of the thought as it is being expressed to an imaginary audience the interpreter should endeavor to identify himself with the thought, moods, and emotions he finds, and with the essential creative impulses and experiences of the speaker in the literature used. This identification should become such that the interpreter merges his own life experience into that of the speaker in the literature, so that he, in imagination, is the speaker; and so that he experiences first hand the thought and moods of the literature. This means that the interpreter should ultimately step out of an objective and arm's-length relation to the thought in the literature, and make it his own. This means that although the interpreter must analyze and investigate and study

the dictionary, and search his own mind for a clear understanding of the thought, he should in this process and by this process, constantly make the thought his own. Until he does this his preparation is not adequate. If his imagination works clearly enough so that he sees a landscape vividly with the inner eye, the landscape is his own; and when he describes it, he is the speaker—the creator, and not a reporter for someone else who has seen it. In preparation the interpreter should stay with specific thought, pictures, experiences, and emotions until he possesses them and is possessed by them. Frequently it will take but a moment of extra time for the thought to pass over from an objective to an intensely personal realization, so that all the interpreter needs to do when he begins to understand the thought clearly is to give himself time for the thought to intensify itself and become first-hand and personal. The development of the habit of poise and freedom from hurry will do much to make thought intensely and personally realized. Take time to think. Think twice before you speak and three times after, and in speaking, speak for yourself. In this way habits of clear personal realization of the thought in literature will be built up, and will add power to the act of oral interpretation.

But if an interpreter gets a clear, intense, and personal realization of the thought he is not necessarily prepared for the act of good oral interpretation. This thought must be communicated to others so that they too get a clear, intense, and personal realization of it. To this end the interpreter should build up the feeling of responsibility for a clear and genuine communication of the thought. He should practice trying to express the thought clearly to himself, a friend, a teacher, or an imaginary audience. In this practice he should try to feel himself face to face and close to his listeners. He should assume that his listeners are looking at him and are genuinely attentive to the thought. He should assume that his listeners do not have printed copies of the literature before them. If practicing with a friend the friend should not hold the manuscript. The interpreter should never practice with a prompter, who will give him words. He should not permit himself to be prompted by anyone except himself. Prompting pampers the habit of memorizing words. It hinders the development of sustained and creative thinking in the act of

communication. The best oral interpretation including acting is impossible where prompting is practiced. The need of prompting indicates inadequate preparation or lack of ability to think in the presence of an audience. Prompting is not a cure for lack of confidence. The interpreter who interprets from memory should not take a copy of the literature to the platform with him expecting to use it, if he should forget. If he is sufficiently prepared he will do better to burn his bridges behind him.

Good communication to an audience depends upon clearness of speech. The interpreter should work for a pure, clear, accurate utterance, one that he can hear with his outer ear. He should try to communicate with himself, not through his chest or his cheeks or his upper lip or nose, but through the opening between his lips and teeth where his sense of taste and bite is most keen. In this communication to his outer ear he should practice for the greatest certainty and clearness of speech. He should try not to mumble or shut in his speech, or to shriek it aloud to the vacant air, but he should try to talk quietly, distinctly, and genuinely to himself, and to be at the same time an attentive, highly-concentrated listener. He should try to make his speech sounds convey, through his outer ears, a very definite idea of the thought he is realizing. This is not easy because the ears get so much vocal vibration directly from the head. This may be demonstrated by speaking while the ears are covered with the hands. A little experimenting in speaking first with the hands held like cups behind the ears, then in front of the ears, or above or beneath them, will help to give the interpreter a better sense of the sound of his own voice. Another experiment that may also help is to speak with the hands before the mouth, first in the shape of a megaphone, and then as a cupped muffler over the mouth. Any experiment that will help the interpreter hear the clearness and purity of communication latent in his voice should prove a valuable preparation for clear communication.

Clear communication, is, of course, not limited to the voice alone. Lack of action may be dumber than mumbled words. The interpreter should practice to be physically alert and attentive to what he is saying, and should try to make his physical expression a significant and harmonious part of the clear realization of the thought.

In order to give to an audience a clear, intense, and personal realization of the thought that the interpreter has, he should practice to keep the thought going without a break, when once it is started. He should keep the ideal of continuity in mind. He should practice to increase the length of pauses between groups of words without stopping the sense of continuity of inner sound and the flow of inner thought. He should cultivate the habit of expressing a stream of thought rather that blocks or fragments of thought. He should try to avoid the tendency to let the thought die at the end of lines, sentences, paragraphs, acts, or other formal divisions of the printed page.

In preparing for the act of communication the interpreter should work for a true ring in the speaking and reading tones. Especially should he guard against the "reading voice" that so often goes with reading aloud from a book or manuscript. If he can make his realization clear and strong enough he probably will have little trouble with false tones.

Certain common faults should be recognized and avoided. First there is a tendency to pitch the voice too high. Elevation of the pitch is natural in speaking to a relatively large group and in trying to overcome poor acoustic conditions. The excitement and the need of being heard tend to elevate the tone. This tendency makes excessively high pitch and sustained tones a common weakness in all kinds of public speaking. People in the audience are a long ways off, and there is a strong tendency to call out to them in a loud voice as though they were deaf. This may be counteracted by cultivating a sense of clearness and nearness in communication. Instead of calling out to an imaginary audience in practice, or raising the voice for people in the back of the hall, it is better to feel that the audience is coming to the speaker. It is better for the speaker to practice drawing power in the voice rather than reaching power. It is better to avoid tones that seem to push an audience away, and to encourage tones that seem to draw an audience near. In short it is better to cultivate intimacy than to cultivate calling power.

Another thing that the interpreter should try to avoid is the single-level speech melody, and the melody that is mechanically varied. Melody is the succession of speech note on the pitch scale. Sustained

or chanted tones, half song and half speech, are a common result of excessive and general emotion in which thought is indefinite and submerged; or of the emulation of traditional speaking or chanting heard in liturgies of churches or in the public "singing" of poetry. In any case these false melodies are true to an emotional over-balance and a lack of clear specific thought. They are true to a kind of dull or ecstatic spiritualism, like the blind incantations of primitive men. Sometimes habits of periodic uniformity in breathing, or other muscular movements, like the raising and lowering of the feet in a dance, or the swaying of the body, may cause the voice to rise and fall—go up the scale and down in more or less uniform melodic patterns. Sometimes excessive study of melody and drill on inflections may develop the habit of playing the voice over the scale, as a piano player runs the scales in exercises. The interpreter over-skilled in pitch technique is tempted to "play the piece with variations." Here again clear personal thinking with a sense of close contact in communication will do much to prevent or overcome this fault. If the interpreter will interpret a bit of literature to a friend as he is shaking hands with him and looking into his eyes, he will probably break up bad faults in melody. A lively sense of personal contact between interpreter and listener, together with clear realization of the thought at the instant it is being expressed, is the preventive medicine for melody trouble.

Another common fault is uniform and excessive volume, loudness, and force. In rehearsal it is well for the interpreter to try to speak clearly, distinctly, and quietly enough to be able to hear himself think. When he thinks clearly enough he will stop excessive noise-making and tend to hear and use highly intelligible speech. A sense of perfect silence is the beginning of perfect communication.

Frequently excessive volume, loudness, force and similar faults are caused by vast or noisy audience-rooms. Great distance between speaker and listener destroys intimacy of contact, while poor acoustics destroy the sense of silence and the concentration of attention that goes with silence. In preparation the interpreter should practice in a room where conditions encourage a high degree of quiet, easy, distinct speaking. Much bawling on the platform and in the theater is due to bad acoustics, and to a vast no-man's-land between the

speaker and the audience. The false declamatory tones that get into public speech come not alone from the parrot-like recital of mechanically read or committed words, or from failure to listen and think, but also from hindrances to easy and intimate communication that so often surround the public speaker. While the interpreter must prepare to contend with the bad conditions which prevail in so many auditoriums, he should in preparation avoid the ill effects of such auditoriums. To this end he should not rehearse in a bare, reverberating, noisy hall, even if he has to speak in this hall later. He may try out the empty hall for a few minutes to discover its bad influences while it is empty and to try to warn himself against conditions when an audience is in the hall, but he should not hope to develop excellence in oral interpretation under these conditions. It is better to try to build up clearness in communication by the right kind of practice in the right kind of place. It is worse than foolish for an interpreter to try to prepare himself to interpret literature in a grand-central-railway-station auditorium. This suggestion cannot be emphasized too strongly in view of common practices in training students, for public activities of all kinds from debates to plays, in big bare noisy auditoriums, built to seat a crowd. Such training is worse than none at all as a preparation of oral interpretation.

Naturalness and true ring in the tones and in the pitch and intensity changes of the voice will be easier to maintain if the literature first used to develop power in oral interpretation has an open quiet spirit of clear intelligence in communication, rather than a vast resounding spirit of emotional overflood. Literature of clear and simple communication should be interpreted before "the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of passion" is undertaken. The interpreter should try to build his powers of communication upon the rock foundation of simple, friendly, clear-headed, whole-hearted conversation. On this foundation he can build a passion that will not "o'erstep the modesty of nature," nor be "too tame neither."

Naturalness and true ring of the speech in oral interpretation is not, we know, an exterior attainment, something to be put on like a fancy dress. It comes out of the simplicity, spontaneity, genuineness, and right conditions and relationships in the communication of

clear and sincere thought. The interpreter in rehearsal should try to use his imagination to make vivid and real these spontaneities and intimate relationships. He should bring his thoughts out of a distant and ethereal atmosphere into the realm of back-door, friendly intercourse between neighbors. Large, rich, uncommon thoughts in literature need to be brought close home by the voice without being made commonplace. They need to have human touch, to belong to normal people of this world, and not to be creatures of the supernatural, the hypnotic, or the psycopathic. The restatement of the uncommon in terms of the common will help the interpreter to bring his thoughts out of the clouds, and out of a trance. If the interpreter will practice talking to others about the literature, or will tell to himself in his own words the thoughts that the literature starts in him, he will get down to a basis of conversational reality. When he once has this he can then enrich and intensify the thought in the public communication of the literature itself. This should give him the true ring needed in good oral interpretation.

In preparing for the oral interpretation of a piece of literature the interpreter may well give attention to the development of responsive, genuine, and significant physical action. This does not mean that he should work out in detail the postures, gestures, facial expression "just as they are to be reproduced before an audience." Such preparation would be contrary to the most fundamental ideals of good oral interpretation. It would make the interpreter an automaton rather than a thinker. Even in the interpretation of a play, where relationships between characters are involved, fixed positions and movements to indicate these relationships should not be prepared. Prepared action to be used on specific words kills creative thinking. What the interpreter needs to do is to try to free his body from fear, stiffness, and similar restraints on action, and to encourage it to play its part in the thinking that the literature stimulates. He needs to shake off all attempt to pose for a picture, and let his hands, arms, legs, head, lips, eyes, etc., take care of themselves in the game of thought, and play in a whole-hearted and joyous way. He may need to show parts of his body how to play the game of thought more significantly. Just how he can make his body more significantly alive can only be vaguely suggested in print. He must

discover for himself, by experimentation and by direct personal instruction, the ways and means to this end.

In order to get the body, as a whole, alive in the act of thinking it is a good thing to try to distribute the consciousness of physical aliveness to the large muscles of the shoulders, back, arms, and legs, and to the movements of the finger-tips, and to the ankles and the toes. A kitten is alive to the tip of its tail when it prepares to spring for a spool fastened to a string and moved in play by a child. The sense of aliveness should be distributed to the extremities of the body, in order to make the whole body more sensitively alive. The act of moving the point of the foot from side to side, or tapping it on the floor, will serve to distribute and spread out the sense of physical aliveness. The act of holding the hands in various positions and sensing what "it feels like" is also a good experiment. For example, turn the palms down and away from the body, and bend the hand back at the wrist sharply, and separate the fingers widely; or clench the fist with the thumbs locking in the fingers, then lift and lower the elbow, or tense and lift the shoulder; or place the palm of the hand over the abdomen, then over the side of the body or around towards the small of the back, then over the throat, the chin, the forehead, the back of the head, etc.; or put the back of the open hand against the forehead, half shut the fingers and then pull the hand downward to the throat and to the side; or shut the hand with the exception of the little finger and then scratch the tip of the nose lightly with the little finger, while the elbow is raised or lowered; or scratch over the ear or the edge of the lower lip; or put the finger-tips of the two hands lightly together while the palms are apart, point them upward close to the chest under the chin, and at the same time try to make the lips feel thin and pursed as in tasting something tart yet pleasing, then speak a few words while in this physical state; or lift one hip so as to make one leg seem shorter than the other, and then walk a few steps, keeping the short leg stiff like a wooden leg; or turn the toes out and walk, or in and walk. There are a thousand such little experiments that one may use to give him a sense of aliveness and to liberate the responsiveness of various parts of the body.

One of the chief functions of physical action is to give the inter-

preter significant physical concentration and participation in the act of creative thinking. If the body is dead in responsive action from the chin downward, as is too often the case, the clearness and creative thinking, as one tries to interpret a piece of literature for an audience, is certain to be weak and inadequate. The body must be made alive to the tips of the fingers and to the soles of the feet. The burden of a strain must be relieved from the front and lower abdominal muscles, and the main load of the speaking must be carried like a pack down the back. The muscles down the front of the thighs must be freed from the strain of pulling the body along in walking, and the heavy work of mental running and jumping must be taken on by the large muscles at the back of the upper leg. This redistribution of muscular effort, if it is attained, should relieve the general strain in speaking, and give new freedom and pleasure to the physical action.

A most useful experiment to help the interpreter get his body alive and responsive is for him to balance himself on an imaginary tight-wire. A crack between boards in the floor will serve as the wire. The imagination should give the experimenter a sense of balancing himself on this wire, so that he can feel the swing and spring of it beneath his weight. The imagination should enable him to walk upon this wire, kneel and rise, and even spring upon it with increasing swing until he can, in imagination, leap into the air, turn a back somersault and land safely upon the wire again. The body in this way tends to get through the imagination, a keen sense of balance, poise, self-mastery, and concentrated physical attention, which should carry over into the less acrobatic act of oral interpretation. If the interpreter will experiment with this complete physical aliveness in balancing himself on an imaginary tight-wire, and at the same time try to express bits of the literature he is preparing, he will tend to awaken the sense of quick co-ordinations, the memory of which will make his thinking much more of a creative experience as he faces an audience.

During this imaginary wire-walking the arms will be extended instinctively to balance the body, and the hands and fingers will become alert to feel and assist in this balance. This instinctive use of the arms and hands in reaching out, balancing, and feeling is very impor-

tant in the development of the expressive aliveness of the arms and hands as a part of complete and sensitive thinking. Sometimes the simple experiment of shutting the eyes and reaching out with the hands and finger tips, as one feels his way in the dark, will help the interpreter to reawaken his sense of touch and discrimination in the act of thinking. Reawakend sensitiveness at the finger tips will give finer discrimination and more delicate realization of the thought in literature. Wooden hands and arms, wooden bodies from the chin down, mean wooden and impersonal thinking. Thought cannot be at its best when two-thirds of the body is dead. Thought cannot live in mouth tones alone. Lip service is not life service, any more than print is living thought.

Experiments in the relaxation and re-vitalization of various parts of the body should also help to develop a sense of controlled freedom in action. For example, the hands and fingers may be given a new tingle by relaxing them from the wrist and shaking them in various ways. As an experiment raise the hands towards the chin with the palms turned towards the body, lift the elbows so that the forearms are nearly parallel with the floor, then strike downward with the hands relaxed; lift the hands and repeat this striking, at first slowly and then with increasing rapidity until the hands and fingers tingle. Repeating a count from one to ten in harmony with the downward snap of the hands will tend to make the time between speech and physical impulse in movement more incisive. A sense of perfect syncronization between the vocal expression of thought and the muscular climaxes in movement in physical expression cannot be overdeveloped. Every movement of the body in thinking should be in time-harmony with the thinking, either vocalized or silently realized, if the oral interpretation is to be at its best. The interpreter must in the majority of cases re-learn to walk so that his movements in walking reinforce the changing intensities of thought. He must try to get in step physically with the stepping of thought. His impulses to walk and move as he is thinking in speech with others should be the impulses of thinking rather than automatic reflex habits of locomotion, that have no relationship to active thinking. Nothing is more difficult for the student of oral interpretation to learn than to walk and move so that physical movements intensify the concentration.

Another experiment to develop aliveness may be tried with the head and neck muscles. A rigid neck, working at but one joint, with rigid shoulder-blade muscles, and rigid upper arms, is a very common form of physical stiffness in speaking. Sometimes this condition comes from efforts to stand erect, hold up the chest, and keep the head on straight. Sometimes it comes from fear, or from bad muscular habits due to many causes, including tight collars, heavy clothes, tight belts, bad pelvic adjustment, high-heeled shoes, military posture, etc. Rigidity in one part of the body tends to produce rigidity in another part of the body. The apparent *rigor mortis* caused in the calves of the legs by extremely high-heeled shoes—a muscle stiffness similar to that in a quarter of beef hanging in a butcher shop, is quite apt to cause muscle stiffness and strain in the abdominal walls, neck and throat. A tight belt directly tends to induce grunting and strain in the abdominal muscles, and consequently to destroy easy deep breathing, and to produce vocal strain. Many a pinched voice is directly related to tight belts, a tight collar, or high-heeled shoes.

A raised chest, cultivated from false pride in appearance, or a false notion that a large upper chest lung capacity is essential to health, or sought through ignorance concerning the shape of the lungs and the nature of natural deep breathing, is a common cause of neck rigidity and voice strain. The interpreter who wants freedom and power in oral interpretation must liberate the muscles in all parts of the body, and learn to use these muscles in powerful responsive action without stiffness or strain.

Stiffness in the neck and the movement of the head is apt to come from the limited or rigid use of the joints of the vertebrae between the base of the skull and a point well down between the shoulders. Instead of bowing and turning the head with several joints free, one upper pivot is used almost exclusively. A little experimenting in bowing and turning the head while confining the pivotal action as much as possible to one joint will show the experimenter the rigid and limited condition from which he should escape (except for purposes of impersonation). By experimenting in moving the head with the vertebrae of the neck free as far down the back as possible, the interpreter should be able to discover a new sense of head freedom and responsiveness, as well as relief from vocal strain.

If the interpreter will have someone stand behind him, take the interpreter's head between the hands and lift part of its weight, and then gently stretch and move the relaxed muscles down the back of the neck, he may by this experiment discover very quickly a new sense of head freedom and of vocal power. In fact, a bad case of voice pinch and strain may sometimes be, for the moment, removed by this modified form of osteopathic experimentation. Then the memory of this moment of freedom may serve as a start upon which new habits in head control and vocal relaxation may be developed.

Any experimentation that will help the interpreter know and escape from rigidity of muscles, and strain of movement, in any part of the body, should add to the general responsiveness and signficance of physical action. It should open up new channels through which the physical impulses of thought may flow. When these new channels are opened, and when new, genuine, though weak, physical impulses of speech and movement start to flow, these impulses should be given free release; and by intensified repetition they should be strengthened. To illustrate, take the words of Macbeth when he is told that Macduff "has fled to England." He says, "The castle of Macduff I will surprise, seize upon Fife, give to the edge of the sword, his wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls that trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool; this deed I'll do before this purpose cool." By repeating the expression, "This deed I'll do" with genuine and growing determination in tone and muscle the interpreter may build up a power in tone and physical action of great and genuine intensity, yet free from the bad effects of muscular rigidity and strain. This practice of intensifying by repetition the expression of a weak but genuine thought is one of the best means of building up power in responsiveness and genuineness, in both vocal expression and physical action; providing always that the clear, personal realization of the thought is intensified in harmony with the intensified expression. Whenever the intensity of vocal or physical expression breaks loose from the harmonious intensity of a clear realization, we have falsehood, and passion "torn to tatters to split the ears of groundlings." Mental-emotional balance is destroyed. The danger of intensifying the expression of a faintly genuine thought comes only when the

intensity destroys the genuineness. One may feel very genuinely the emotion of Shylock when he says, "If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge;" but to force the voice into an uncontrolled tremulous guttural snarl on the word revenge, and to force the body into a froth of intensity or movement, will destroy the genuineness, and defeat the good that may come from this process of intensification.

In the preparation for oral interpretation, and through the act of oral interpretation, the interpreter should gradually acquire greater expressional sensitiveness and power. Expressional sensitiveness is a form of keenness and discrimination in perception and in thought. It is based upon fine and active discrimination in hearing, seeing, tasting, touching, and moving, and upon the fine discriminations in meanings and emotions. If one is color-blind he must necessarily miss much of the pleasure that comes from the delicate changes in the tints of a sunset. If one cannot tell one tune or tone from another he will know but little of the rich orchestral music of great poetry. Pyschological tests indicate that only about one person in twenty is able to detect a pitch change of one-half of one vibration per second. This one person has a natural advantage over others in recognizing pitch, and in developing expressional sensitiveness to such changes. He possesses one of the essentials of a good ear for music, and a good ear for oral language sensitiveness.

That individuals differ in their natural sensitiveness is well established. These differences influence the ultimate development in expressional sensitiveness. But the expressional sensitiveness and power of an interpreter is not determined entirely by the inherent natural keenness of the senses alone. It is also determined by the use to which the senses have been put. The majority of people have a fairly large degree of natural sense keenness, but they are not in the habit of using it to the best advantage in the appreciation and oral interpretation of literature. Their expressional sensitiveness is relatively dull because of lack of use. They have seldom or never heard the orchestral music of poetry, not because they cannot hear it, but because they have not listened to it, or have had very little, if any, chance to hear it. One may have natural sensitiveness to color changes yet be slow to see the changing beauty in a sunset, because the eyes

have not been fed on sunset color changes. They are not practiced in discrimination. We become most actively and discriminatingly sensitive to the things upon which our senses are most intelligently and carefully exercised. One important reason why expressional sensitiveness and power in oral interpretation is not greater is simply because the latent sensitiveness in expressional discrimination has not been used.

Discrimination is the act of recognizing differences. Sensitiveness is a subjective experience with small differences. Expressional sensitiveness is the feeling for and use of relatively small differences in speech and action in the realization and communication of thought. The development of expressional sensitiveness may to some extent be aided by a clear knowledge of some of the sources of expressional difference, and by careful effort to detect relatively small differences in these sources. It is not necessary here to go into a detailed explanation of the theory of sound and vocal expression, nor the theory of physical action. A book like Fulton and Trueblood's "Practical Elocution," or James Rush's "Philosophy of the Human Voice" will give details. Just a few things of most direct practical value may be worth noting.

First, the time occupied by successive units of thought is not the same. Some thought may be realized and expressed quickly, while other thought takes longer time. A careful study of the time spent on different parts of the flow of thought will reveal a great variety of difference in time consumed. Time is always going on. Some of this time is used when speech sounds are being made, and some of it when the sounds live only in silence. These periods of audible and silent sound are the necessary result of catching and exhaling the breath, and of the flow and ebb of attention in thought. It takes time for the senses to fix their full attention upon an object of thought and to let go of it again. It takes time for the attention to dissolve and reform from picture to picture. This process of dissolving and reforming is of ever-changing duration. Differences in time consumption in thought exist; and the richer the mental activity the finer and more varied these differences become. By an effort to detect these differences, and observe them in objective measurements or graphic time-patterns, the interpreter may make his subjective

sensitiveness in expression more alert and discriminating. That is, he may make his creative thinking more alert and discriminating. The object of practice in objective analysis should be to make more active the subjective expressional sensitiveness to time changes in the thought stimulated by the literature.

It should be obvious that changes in time consumed in thinking have no intrinsic relation to the spacing of words in print, but that on the contrary the spacings in print tend to prevent an ordinary degree of sensitiveness to the flow of speech in time. This being true, the interpreter can aid himself in developing more sensitive timing in his thought and expression by the practice of analyzing carefully the changes in time consumed. This analysis can be put in rough graphic form by writing the words of the literature with spaces between them approximately equal to the time passed through. This, of course, is a very imperfect graphic representation, but in spite of its crudeness it will tend to make the interpreter aware of the changes in time consumed—both in utterance and in silence. To illustrate take the following: "Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm; and in the chasm are foam and yellow sands." In this form the printed spaces indicate nothing except uniformity in the passing of time. If these words are respaced and looped together as in the following, the thought-movement in time and the relation of succeeding thoughts may be more definitely suggested.

|_____Long_____lines_____of Cliff_____| |_____breaking_____

|_____have left___a chasm___| |_____and in the chasm_____

|_____are foam___| |___and___yellow sands_____.|

By a careful analytical study in black and white of the distribution of syllables in time the interpreter should be able to acquire, not a definition of grouping, of long quantity or short quantity, of stopt or continuant sounds, of slow or fast rate, but a more sensitive inner awareness of small differences in the duration of passing thought, as it is being clearly and personally realized and expressed. This development of sensitiveness to the variations in the duration of thought is probably of much greater and more direct practical value to the interpreter than effort to develop sensitiveness to pitch changes. It

is possible that the inherent sensitiveness to pitch differences and changes is more definitely fixed upon the individual, and hence less subject to conscious improvement, than is the inherent feeling for the passing of time. This, however, is a matter for psychologists to try to determine. Long experience with students in the development of excellence in oral interpretation seems to indicate that a quicker and less mechanical development in expressional sensitiveness is reached by a careful analysis of changes in thought duration and in energy variation, rather than by a detailed analysis of pitch or tone changes. Nevertheless, the interpreter can gain in general expressional sensitiveness by using his concentrated listening power to hear, both with the ear and in the imagination, the pitch and tone changes in a piece of literature; for literature at its best is articulate music, in which pitch and tone play a large part, as well as time and intensity. Formal analysis of pitch and tone changes is not of great importance; but the practice of trying to listen closely in the imagination for the pitch and tone music of articulate thought, as one thinks clearly and quietly, is a practice that should help the interpreter quicken his expressional sensitiveness in speech.

It is more important to hear, and to have, a clear impulse to produce the pitch levels and changes of pathos and joy, and the tones of bird songs, thunder and winds, than it is to know the definition of a semi-tone, minor third, a rising triad, or a pectoral quality. Here again, knowledge of technical terms used in a scientific analysis of pitch and tone have very little value in developing keener sensitiveness to the articulate music of pitch and tone in speech. What the interpreter needs to develop is his synthetic sensing of the changing and blending of pitch and tone in uttered thought; rather than a detailed measuring and description of these changes. If this is true, about all that the interpreter needs to try to develop directly is a general active sensitiveness to the rise and fall of pitch, and to the variations in purity, clearness, volume, and the emotional character of tone. This is probably best developed by concentrated effort to listen to and hear, in the imagination, the general changes in pitch and tone that flow with changing thought.

Take as an experiment the following: "My short and happy day is done; the long and lonely night comes on, and at my door the pale

horse stands to carry me to distant lands." Try to hear the change in pitch level between *happy* and *done;* also the changes in tone fullness. Try these words on the tongue in thought. Try to express freely what you feel and let the voice produce a satisfying music. Listen to one whose music of expressed thought is satisfying.

Keen sensitiveness to intensity and touch changes is an important source of expressional power. It may be consciously aroused by experiments like the following: Take the words, "It is an impossibility;" tap with a pencil at the utterance of each syllable, and notice the changes in intensity from tap to tap, with the climax in intensity reached on the accented syllable of *impossibility.* Take the sentences, "The war then must go on. We must fight it through." Notice the heavy intensity of tapping on the words *on* and *through* at the end of the sentences. Also notice the finality of feeling that goes with this final intensity climax. Or again take the following: "Sweet and low, sweet and low, wind of the western sea, low, low, breathe and blow, wind of the western sea! Over the rolling waters go, come from the dying moon, and blow, blow him again to me; while my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps." Try to read this as one continuous experience in thought, and not as fragments. Notice the general rising in intensity towards the words *blow him again to me.* Also study the finer variations in intensity on "Sweet and low, sweet and low." The second uttering of the words *sweet and low* is probably with greater intensity than the first, because as the mother listens to the sound of the wind of the western sea the impression that it is sweet and low grows upon her and causes her to repeat the words to express her fuller experience. By looking for other changes like these in the intensity of the thought the interpreter will add to his sentiveness in the use of speech and action energy, and at the same time become more sensitively responsive to the more delicate shades of thought in literature.

The act of tapping with a pencil, or with the tip of the finger, is an act of touching. The interpreter should try to build up in the act of touching the widest possible range of finely separated intensities, from the very lightest to the strongest. The most sensitive interpreter should be able to feel hundreds of different intensities in this energy of touching. This sensitiveness will reflect itself in the touching

of vocal and physical expression, and in the intensities of the whole thinking-expressing experience. Upon this sensitiveness depends the experience of climax, reserve energy, keenness of attention, poise, rhythm, and other very important things. It is especially important that the average individual should develop sensitiveness to the lightest touches. Power in thinking and expression is a matter of relative sensitiveness in the use and economy of energy and not of absolute horsepower. A strong man able to kill an ox with a blow of the naked fist may be a weakling in the oral interpretation of literature, just as a sledgehammer is useless in making the most essential parts of a watch. The average interpreter uses too much vocal energy to develop the greatest expressional sensitiveness. He tries to be a brute-force interpreter.

It is not brute force, but a high degree of expressional sensitiveness, that is essential to the best oral interpretation. This sensitiveness leads to the outer act of speech, in which the subtleties of thought are reflected and revealed. It is inseparably linked with fine discriminations in thinking. Its development goes hand in hand with the development of higher sensitiveness in the finer shades of thinking. All experiments in the more careful recognition of differences in time, intensity, pitch, and tone should have as their objective, not a testing or discovery of scientific facts and theories concerning the nature of vocal expression, but primarily a drawing out of latent subjective sensitiveness and power in the act of oral interpretation.

In preparing for the oral interpretation of a piece of literature from the printed page the following suggestions may prove useful. First, a clear, intense, and personal realization of the sense as well as the moods and feelings should be worked for. Second, the interpreter should become so familiar with the flow of the thought that he can keep the thought alive and going in spite of the interference of the printed page. The language may become so familiar that the interpreter can look away from the printed page a large part of the time, using the page only like notes to help the thought over transitions and to prompt the memory of the exact language used in the literature. Third, he should mark the printed page for difficult groupings of words, long pauses that are apt to be passed over too quickly, and the ends of lines where the thought runs on into the next line.

By looping together words that belong together, and by using check marks of some kind to indicate long lapses of time between groups of thought, he can assist his eye and mind to escape more easily and completely from the mechanics of print. By his own interpretive mechanical marks he can prevent some of the trouble coming from the mechanics of print.

In interpreting with the book in the hand the book should not be held formally or "properly." An easy friendly handling of the book, with either hand, or both, in such a way that it seems to become a part of the interpreter himself, will help the interpreter escape from the interference of the book in hand. Using a reading desk or music stand to hold the book usually increases the sense of mechanical difficulty in the mind of both speaker and audience. It smacks of a formal preparation, in which the interpreter is not quite free to trust his memory without prompting, but needs both hands free for gesture. It also puts the printed source of his inspiration too far away from the speaker. As the book is held intimately in the hands, or even half in the arms, like something that is part of the speaker's affections, it should be used easily and freely as a part of the interpreter to express his intensities of action and his general elevations and depressions of spirit. The book in the hands should be used in such a way that the interpreter has the fullest freedom of action possible. He may change the book from one hand to the other as he wishes to set free one hand or the other, and he may use the free hand over the print to aid the eye to come back to the right place on the page. All this should be spontaneous and without formality or stiffness.

The greatest excellence in oral interpretation is possible only when the interpreter is unhindered by the presence or memory of the printed page. In preparing for such interpretation the interpreter must pass through a period of memorizing as it is commonly called. However, this period should not be the semi-mechanical fixing of words in the mind that is commonly regarded as memorizing. This period in which the language flow of thought becomes established in the mind, so that it is subject to spontaneous, unbroken, and unlabored recall, should be thought of as a period of thought perfecting, rather than a period of word fixing. The practice of forcing the mind to remember the

words of a piece of literature before creative personal realization of the thought begins, should not be encouraged. The mind can remember bare words, nonsense syllables, or the sounds of a foreign language which it does not understand, but it is senseless to force it to do so.

In this phase of preparation for oral interpretation which we call memorizing, the interpreter should look at the printed page as little as possible. He does not want a memory of printed symbols, but should try to change printed symbols quickly and completely into his own personal thought, and to fix this thought experience in his memory without a visual image of printed symbols. This is most important. The visual image of the printed symbols should not, if possible be allowed to impress itself on the mind; but in its place should be clear and vivid thought, ideas, reasons, moods, actions, etc. These living thoughts should be impressed upon the mind. They should be intensified in clearness and vividness as they are being expressed in living words, until both the living thought and the living words will live again at the wish of the interpreter. Such memorizing leads to living, creative thinking in oral interpretation, and not to the unpacking of goods stored under pressure. When thought stimulated by literature becomes vivid and significant enough in the language of the literature it is remembered in that language. A relatively small number of vivid "re-experiencings" of this remembered thought-in-language, spread over relatively long intervals of time, will fix it in the memory so that even after long lapses of time the interpreter can recall it without effort. In this way a piece of literature becomes an experience that "cannot be forgotten."

There are other suggestions concerning the act of memorizing that the interpreter may profit by. First, he should not try to crowd the mind to remember a piece of literature all at once. This weakens creative thinking power and leads to inferior oral interpretation. The act of memorizing should take place gradually and at a relatively long time before the act of oral interpretation. All sense of effort to remember should have ceased at least a week or two before the act of oral interpretation. Some minds have the ability to memorize a piece of literature that is not too long within a few hours of the time it is to be given to an audience, but the oral interpretation in these cases is seldom of high excellence, and the words of the literature

are generally quickly forgotten. Individual differences make it important for each interpreter to know himself and to establish those habits of memorizing for oral interpretation that will lead to the highest excellence. We may however, accept the general rule that it takes time to think deeply and to establish living thought in the memory. Cramming may help the interpreter to "get by," but there is little satisfaction or virtue in it.

Before he tries to memorize any part of a piece of literature the interpreter should feel something of the general moods and music of the literature as a whole. Lines, sentences, paragraphs, or blocks of the literature should not be memorized as such without an impression of their part in the larger sweep of the thought. The impression of a continuous, unbroken sweep in the moods and music of a piece of literature is sometimes very quickly remembered, like the tune of a song before the words are known. Moods and music of living thought are an essential part of literature; and when the true moods and music are once experienced they become the main threads upon which clear and specific thought is woven. The threads should be set up as the first act in the weaving of memory. Upon these threads the rich patterns of clear and specific thought should be worked out; for without these patterns oral interpretation becomes an emotional moaning without clear and rational significance. Because it is easier to remember the general moods and music, or tune, of a piece of literature, the interpreter should begin with this, but he should always have a care to add specific patterns of thought to this unbroken flow of moods and music.

In the process of memorizing, the interpreter should avoid a mechanical oral-repetition of the words just to fix them in the memory, like mathematical formulæ. At times he may well give simple, quiet, oral expression to the thought, and feel simple impulses to action. At other times he may well give full and free expression to the language of the thought. At still other times he may well think through the literature silently and intensely, as it were in the stillness of his own soul, yet with genuine impulses to speech and action held in leash. In this way he can enrich the sense of depth and power in speech and action, as well as the spirit of truthfulness and personal significance of the thought.

The suggestion that preparation should be made when the body is fresh with vitality, free from weariness and exhaustion, applies to this phase of preparation we call memorizing. The common sense of this suggestion needs no further emphasis.

The suggestion that the preparation of a piece of literature should be thorough and should be practically finished, for the time being, at least a week before it is to be interpreted for an audience, also needs little emphasis. The best that an interpreter can do under any set of circumstances is none too good for himself or his audience. He should therefore control the circumstances of preparation as far as he can, so that his best will be done. Having prepared himself, first, by a clear, intense, and personal realization of the thought aroused by the literature, and by the clear, sincere, sensitive expression of this for himself and for an imaginary audience, and having experienced the easy and spontaneous recall of the course of the thought in the language of the literature, the interpreter, as his final act in preparation, should trust his mind and body to work freely and creatively with new and richer power when the act of public interpretation comes. Trusting himself, he should try to lose himself in rest and wholesome recreation of mind and body that will make him fresh with vitality and free from nervous strain when he faces an audience.

The act of oral interpretation of literature should be a pleasurable and satisfying act, both for the interpreter and the listeners. Through this act a mental companionship and friendliness in thought should be felt; and a sense of mutual experience in the goodness, beauty, truthfulness, and wealth of life should be enjoyed. Through this act should come the satisfying feeling of mutual insight into the universal human spirit; a spirit that laughs and cries, that hopes and fears, that triumphs and fails; a spirit that is always warm, always alive, and always a reflection of our own experience.

PART IV

WRITTEN ANALYSIS

FOR THE STUDENT of oral interpretation who wishes to enlarge his powers to understand and explain the life experiences in literature there is nothing more invigorating than practice in making careful, written analyses of pieces of literature. Especially is this true in the analysis of short poems in which the thought is strongly unified and concentrated. In this practice the student forces himself to make definite written statements concerning the literature. He and others can then judge the truth and accuracy of these statements. The very fact that he must write his answers to fundamental questions of interpretation, and must state in writing his ideas and impressions concerning a piece of literature, tends to make him more definite and exact in his answers and impressions. This builds up his powers to think clearly and definitely in preparation for oral interpretation. However, if the greatest benefit from this practice is to be gained, the student must spend careful time in making the analyses. As he tries to analyze one piece of literature after another, he should enjoy a growing sense of power and satisfaction in the practice. This practice should become a wholesome and pleasurable mental activity, rather than drudgery in writing. The mind should find in this practice a chance to use its energies in an unhampered and unhurried way; an opportunity to search, discriminate, meditate, and catch in written form the fleeting creations that the literature stimulates.

The plan for written analysis that is outlined below is intended for use in connection with classroom study of oral interpretation. If each member of a class will make a written analysis of twenty or thirty short poems selected from the literature used in the class, the class will have not only a common body of material upon which to exchange their opinions and build their tastes in oral interpretation, but they will also have a much increased power to understand and enjoy poetry. Mental effort, well and definitely expended in formal written analyses, should bring the student a power of rational insight into literature that will serve him as a fundamental source of higher excellence in oral interpretation.

In making the written analyses any convenient type of paper or notebook may be used, and any clear method of labeling pages. It is well for a class to agree upon a common method. Each new analysis should be started at the top of a new page rather than in the middle of an old one, and the title of the literature analyzed should be put as the heading of the analysis. The margins on the page should be narrow and clear-cut, and the principal headings, such as *speaker, audience,* etc. should stand out clearly for the eye of the reader. If these headings are numbered and underscored the reader will be able to find quickly the particular part of the analysis he may wish to examine. Sometimes the reader will want to know what is said about the central thought before he reads others parts of the analysis. Reasonable care in making the page easy to read, and the various items in the analysis easy to find, should be taken.

The following outline should be filled in for each piece of literature analyzed. Complete, concise sentences or clear phrases should be used. The meaning should be clear to a reader, or to the writer if he should read it twenty years from the time it is written.

1. Speaker
2. Audience
3. Setting
4. Central thought
5. Dominant mood (or moods)
6. Climax (or climaxes)
7. Notes
8. Essay (of appreciation)

Some of the parts of this outline have already been discussed, but the following explanation should make clearer just what is to be done.

1. *Speaker:* This part should answer the question, "Who is speaking?" It should give such parts of the life experience of the speaker as are necessary to a personal insight into the unique point of view and life experience that the literature suggests. The speaker in the literature is seldom the author, but a personality created by the author's imagination; and created in new form by the one who is making the written analysis. It is never sufficient to answer this

question by saying that the speaker is the author. Such an answer adds nothing specific to the interpretation of the piece of literature. It applies to everything an author writes. An author does not create merely one thought experience, but many. What we want to know is, "what is the unique life experience that created, and now creates, this specific piece of literature!" Many questions may be involved in this answer. For example, is a child talking in Riley's "at Aunty's House" or is it an adult with a memory of childhood?

2. *Audience:* This part of the analysis should answer the question, "To whom is the speaker speaking?" Has he a specific listener in mind or the universal ear? Is he his own audience, as in Hamlet's "To be or not to be, that is the question"? Or is he a part of his audience? Is the speaker speaking to children, for example in Dunbar's "When the evening shadows come a-gliding down, falling black and heavy over hill and town. . . . . Lay low; dat's de callin' of de Boogah Man;" or does the speaker speak to the childhood memories of adults? Does the speaker in Poe's "Annabel Lee" speak to a young lad who likes to listen but does not fully understand, or to himself, or does he just speak for the public in general? Does the speaker in Field's "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod" speak to one child in the nursery, or by the fire; or to several children at a story hour; or to a group of college students; or to fathers and mothers; or to those who have ears to hear and minds to understand? Here again, many questions may enter into the answer to the question, "to whom does the speaker speak?" It should be obvious that the audience is not the audience that the interpreter faces in a clasroom or in a public auditorium. The *audience* like the *speaker* in a piece of literature is a creation of the imagination, and is unique to the literature being analyzed. Literature, well interpreted, creates its own audience.

3. *Setting:* This part of the analysis should answer the question, "Where is the speaker when he speaks?" Where for example is the speaker in "The Sands of Dee," as he, or she, says, "O Mary go and call the cattle home, and call the cattle home, and call the cattle home, across the sands o'Dee"? Is he sitting by his cottage door? Is he standing on the shore of the sea? Are these questions important? Is he far away in memory, so that his actual physical surroundings, if they do not interfere with memory, have no part in the creation of

the thought he utters? In the Memoirs of Alfred Tennyson we are told that Tennyson wrote "Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O sea," in the midst of blossoming hedges, far from the sight and sound of the ocean. This fact adds nothing to our appreciation or oral interpretation of this poem. To know this fact is interesting, but not helpful in answering the question, "Where is the speaker as he speaks in this poem." It is interesting to know that the human imagination can break from its immediate surroundings, from blossoming hedges and from barren classroom walls, and find the true environment for the creation of an articulate life experience. Never should the interpreter try to make the setting in which the *speaker* in a piece of literature speaks, the platform on which the interpreter stands, or the chair in which he sits. Things of the imagination must live in the imagination.

4. *Central thought:* This part of the analysis should answer in a single, concise, complete sentence the question, "What is the unique or universal truth or idea expressed in the literature?" What one central thing does the speaker in the literature say? Wordsworth's "The World is Too Much With us" begins, "The world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." What does he mean? What is the thought essence of this poem? In trying to state the central thought it is not sufficient to give the topic or theme of the thought. It is not enlightening to say that the speaker in "Annabel Lee" talks about his love for Annabel Lee. We want to know the one main thing he says, and we should like this in terms of universal experience; some such thought as, great love is eternal. We like to see the similarity of life experience between the central thought in "Annabel Lee" and in Browning's "Evelyn Hope" and in Field's "Little Boy Blue." Sometimes this central thought is every difficult to fix in a satisfying sentence, but the effort to state it clearly and definitely should give satisfying stimulation to the powers of insight into literature.

5. *Dominant Mood:* This part of the analysis should answer the question, "How does the speaker feel as he speaks?" and how does the listener feel as he gets a clear, intense, and personal realization of the thought in the literature? What prevailing emotions sweep through the listener as he creates this literature for himself? Is it

a spirit of happiness, or horror, or playfulness, or satire, or wistfulness, or gloom, etc.? Sometimes a single word is enough to answer this part of the analysis. More often a phrase or a group of descriptive adjectives is needed. A complete sentence is seldom needed to suggest the dominant mood. Often moods are mingled in conflict, like sorrow and hope, love and fear. The general feeling or complex feelings that the interpreter has should be described.

6. *Climax:* This part of the analysis should answer the question, "Where is the point of highest interest?" Where does the thought or the mood reach its greatest intensity? In determining this the contributing climaxes may be specified, or better yet, a curve of the rise and fall of interest may be plotted, with the high points of the curve marked with the words that go with them. Climaxes in interest always exist, if the thinking is continuous and active; and the purpose of this part of the analysis is to find and point out the main climaxes, so that the variety and focus of the thinking may be richer.

7. *Notes:* This part of the analysis should include all necessary explanations of meanings, pictures, experiences, moods, etc. that are apt to be overlooked or but partly understood. For example, is the father in Field's "A Japanese Lullaby" living or dead? What is the unique mother's experience suggested in the words, "Am I not singing, see I am swinging, swinging the nest where my darling lies?" What is the meaning of the word nest? What is the picture and the mood in "The sedge is withered from the lake, and no birds sing"? The notes should give explanations that enter directly into personal appreciation of the literature. They should not contain historical or biographical information unessential to a personal creation of the literature. The notes in some cases may take the form of interpretive comments, definitions of words, and explanations of uncommon customs, allusions, etc.

8. *Essay:* This part of the analysis should be a constructive, compact, coherent little essay-of-appreciation. It should be an artistic unit, rather than fragmentary observations or comments. In its ideal form, it should have as high a literary worth as the literature itself. It should bring together in a unit the essence of the impressions that the literature makes on the one who writes the essay. The essay should be the writer's sincere impression, and not a borrowed opinion.

It should be a synthesis of thought, rather than a summary. It should be well organized, growing rapidly about a germ of thought, and leaving a harmonious and complete impression upon the one who reads it. It may utilize any of the ideas suggested in the first seven parts of the analysis, but in an informal way. It may dwell upon and enlarge any of these parts that seem most vital to an abundant appreciation of the literature.

This little essay of appreciation should stick to the most essential life experiences suggested by the literature. Its general object should be to make richer the personal and aesthetic insight into the literature. It should not try to give a history of the author or of his times, unless such information is essential to an insight into the literature. It should not try to discuss the author's style or the sources of his material. It should not try to classify the literature, or put it in its place in the hall of fame. It should not discuss types of poetry, metrical form, or other technical information; for such discussion adds nothing to the intimate and personal appreciation of the literature. The general spirit of the essay should be to intensify the satisfaction that the full blown rose can give, rather than to pull out its petals and study its cellular structure. It should seek to make the loveliness of the human face more lovely, rather than to tear off the skin and dissect the muscles and nerves underneath the human smile and tear. In others words, the purpose of this essay should be to create an aesthetic satisfaction, rather than the satisfactions that come from cataloguing critical, historical, or scientific data.

The following examples taken in part from written analysis made by students, are intended to give a more specific idea of what is to be done in the practice of written analysis. The examples are not set up as ideals but as illustrative samples of what may be done.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

(See page 247)

1. *Speaker:* One from whom death has taken a deeply loved friend.

2. *Audience:* The spiritual universe about him, and those who can understand his feelings as their own.

3. *Setting:* In imagination or in fact the speaker is standing on a

broken sea coast above and some distance from the water. Below him towards the sea he can see the fisherman's children playing on the sands, hear the sailor lad singing in his boat on the bay, and watch the restless ocean with its ships of commerce sailing to far off ports.

4. *Central Thought:* The loss by death of a greatly loved companion leaves a vast eternal hunger in the heart, which is purified but not satisfied by the joy of others.

5. *Dominant Mood:* A vast, unutterable, unrelieved, yet wistful and divine sorrow.

6. *Climax:* The surge of sorrowful longing is greatest in the words, "O for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." A second but subsiding surge comes on the words, "The tender grace of a day that is dead will never come back to me." In this the feeling of infinite goodness forever gone comes to its climax.

7. *Notes:* The words *shouts, sings, tender grace,* and *haven* suggest the joy, repose, and goodness of life. *Haven* suggests the satisfaction of rest from labor. *Stately ships* suggests the majesty, grace, and calm courage of life. *Cold gray stones* suggests the chill of sorrow. *O sea* suggests the vastness, the endless power, and the eternal mystery of suffering. *Under the hill* probably means below the hill of the sea. It suggests the vastness and mystery beyond the horizon of things seen.

8. *Essay:* The vast, mysterious, eternal restlessness of the ocean is like the vast, mysterious, eternal restlessness of human sorrow and happiness. The power of the sea, like the power of sorrow, is irresistible. It beats forever over the broken fragments of the shore. It calls forever to the empty places among the crags. It carries the sailor to far off places and teaches his children to sing to its rhythms. It feeds the fisherman and keeps clean and free the sands where his children play. Sometimes it takes into its mysterious depths the hands and voices without which the inner happiness of food, commerce, song, and play are gone forever. It is not strange that Tennyson, who had lost his dearest companion through the power of the sea, should pour out his sorrow, and our sorrow, over its vast and restless mystery.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

(See page 100)

1. *Speaker:* One who loves the inherent purity, truthfulness, beauty, and goodness of out-door things.

2. *Audience*: Any one who can understand that men struggling con-

stantly for possessions and the satisfactions of an assumed morality, lose their powers to know truth, beauty, and goodness in their purest forms.

3. *Setting:* The speaker is standing alone on a pleasant lea, overlooking a calm lake, underneath a clear moon.

4. *Central Thought:* It would be better to be a pagan, uncivilized, and without commerce and organized business, than not to know the beauty, the perfect freedom from deception, the wealth and goodness, and inspiration to live abundantly in the realm of the spirit, that nature offers to man.

5. *Dominant Mood:* Regretful realization of the limitations man has placed upon his own power to see truth and beauty through nature.

6. *Climax:* The thought climax is reached in the words, "for this, for everything we are out of tune." The emotional climax begins with, "Great God! I'd rather be a pagan."

7. *Notes:* (1) Proteus and Triton were Greek sea gods. (2) There are no secrets between the moon and the sea. (3) A lea is a meadow; and *pleasant lea* suggests openness, freedom, goodness, pleasure of the spirit. (4) *Blow his wreathed horn* suggests fantastical joy, unhindered freedom in pleasure, purity, and goodness. (5) *Like sleeping flowers* suggests complete stillness, perfect rest.

8. *Essay:* This little poem crystalizes man's regret for what man has made of man. We can never escape the world as built by man himself. To secure honor, power, or even a livelihood, we hurry and worry in pursuit of some idol of clay. Our hearts, even our souls sometimes, are pledged to secure a trifle that society has said is good. The beauty of calm water under the moon, and the hush of still air, have lost their significance for man. He is no longer one with the goodness of nature. He might better be a pagan than be without the joy, freedom, and sense of goodness that comes from nature.

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"ONE, TWO, THREE"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy who was half-past three,
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go running and jumping,
And the boy no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin, little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree;
And the game that they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down,
On his one little sound right knee,
And he'd guess where she was hiding,
In guesses One, Two, Three!

"You are in the china closet!"
He would cry and laugh with glee.
It wasn't the china closet;
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are warm and warmer;
But you're not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where Mama's things used to be,
So it must be the clothespress, Gran'ma!"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple tree—
This old, old, old, old lady,
And the boy with the lame little knee;
This dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half-past three.

HENRY C. BUNNER

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe,—
Sailed on a river of crystal light
Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we,"
Said Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe;
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew;

The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in the beautiful sea.
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish,—
Never afeared are we!"
So cried the stars to the fishermen three,

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam,—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home.
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea;
But I shall name you the fishermen three;

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed;
So shut your eyes while Mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three,

Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

EUGENE FIELD

JAPANESE LULLABY

Sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;
Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—
Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,—
Silvery star with a tinkling song;
To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—
Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,—
Little golden moonbeam with misty wings;
All silently creeping, it asks, "Is he sleeping—
Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?"

Up from the sea there floats the sob
Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,
As though they were groaning in anguish and moaning—
Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—
Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;
Am I not singing?—see, I am swinging—
Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

Eugene Field

LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise!"

So, toddling off to his trundle-bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

EUGENE FIELD

ANNABEL LEE

IT WAS many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee.
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child
In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee
So that her high-born kinsman came
And bore her away from me,

To shut her up in a sepulchre,
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven
Went envying her and me—
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud one night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THRENOS

O WORLD! O Life! O Time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar

Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

PERCY B. SHELLEY

A DIRGE

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long:
Sad storms whose tears are vain,
Bare woods whose branches stain
Deep caves and dreary main,—
Wail for the world's wrong!

PERCY B. SHELLEY

OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

PERCY B. SHELLEY

THE SANDS OF DEE

"OH, MARY, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee!"

The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land—
And never home came she.

"Oh, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drowned maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes o' Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel, crawling foam,
The cruel, hungry foam,—
To her grave beside the sea;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

THE World is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A GLORY PAST AWAY

(From "Intimations of Immortality")

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things that I have seen I now can see no more.
The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there has past away a glory from the earth.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;

I've thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees,
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:

Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

JOY IN NATURE

To ONE who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.

Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?

Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,

He mourns that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

JOHN KEATS

WATER-SNAKES

BEYOND the shadow of the ship
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings,
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gause no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,—
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil,
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door.
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings;—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

THE STIRRUP CUP

MY SHORT and happy day is done;
The long and lonely night comes on
And at my door the pale horse stands
To carry me to distant lands.

His whinny shrill, his pawing hoof,
Sounds dreadful as a gathering storm;
And I must leave this sheltering roof
And joys of life so soft and warm.

Tender and warm the joys of life—
Good friends, and the faithful and the true;
My rosy children and my wife,
So sweet to kiss, so fair to view.

So sweet to kiss, so fair to view,
The night comes on, the lights burn blue;
And at my door the pale horse stands
To bear me forth to unknown lands.

JOHN HAY

THE CROSS OF SNOW

IN THE long, sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face—the face of one long dead—

Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The lamp-light casts a halo of pale light.
Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.
There is a mountain in the distant West
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side.
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast
These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

A SONG

OH, RED is the English rose,
And the lilies of France are pale
And the poppies grow in the golden wheat,
For the men whose eyes are heavy with sleep,
Where the ground is red as the English rose,
And the lips as the lilies of France are pale,
And the ebbing pulses beat fainter and fainter and fail

Oh, red is the English rose,
And the lilies of France are pale.
And the poppies lie in the level corn
For the men who sleep and never return.
But wherever they lie an English rose
So red, and a lily of France so pale,
Will grow for a love that never and never can fail.

CHARLES ALEXANDER RICHMOND

I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH . . . .

I HAVE a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—

I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 't were better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

ALAN SEEGER

THE DEAD

THESE hearts are woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs, and cheeks. All this is ended.
There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,

A width, a shining peace, under the night.

RUPERT BROOKE

A REVENANT

I ONLY know
Last night he came to me,
Just as he used to come before the days when war and death
Had passed between us.
Close by my side he stood,
His presence filled the fair night's solitude.
Blue moonlight fell about him like a cloak,
And there was moonlight on a bed of hyacinths
Sweet with the breath of love and youth and spring.

I felt his touch;
His eyes looked into mine;
I heard his voice speaking to me
The words he spoke before he went away;
. . . "Beloved, do not weep. There is no need to sorrow.
My love will bring me back for many nights like this—
When there is moonlight on the hyacinths,
And the world is full of love and youth and spring."

And I wept not.
His kisses fell upon my eyes
Like dew, and closed them.
Then slow and stealthily a mist came creeping up,
So that in sudden fear I reached to him, I called him—
But he had slipped away.

Alone—I was alone.
But oh, I know that he will come
Again, and yet again—and war and death
Have never passed between us;
And when he comes, though snows fall, there shall be
Moonlight and hyacinths,
And love, and youth, and spring!

DOROTHY ANDERSON

THE SPIRES OF OXFORD

I saw the spires of Oxford
  As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
  Against the pearl-gray sky.
My heart was with the Oxford men
  Who went abroad to die.

The years go fast in Oxford,
  The golden years and gay,
The hoary Colleges look down
  On careless boys at play.
But when the bugles sounded war
  They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river,
  The cricket-field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford,
  To seek a bloody sod—
They gave their merry youth away
  For country and for God.

God rest you happy gentlemen,
  Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
  Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
  Than even Oxford town.

Winifred M. Letts

AFTER BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening;
  Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage-door
  Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
  His little grandchild, Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round,
That he beside the rivulet,
  In playing there, had found:
She ran to ask what he had found,
  That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
  Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
  And with a natural sigh,
" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
  "Who fell in the great victory."

"I find them in my garden,
  For there's many here about;
And often, when I go to plough,
  The ploughshare turns them out;
For many thousand men," said he,
  "Were slain in that great victory."

"Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
  Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
  With wonder-waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
  And what they fought each other for."

"It was the English," Kaspar cried,
  "Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for
  I could not well make out;
But everybody said," quoth he,
  "That 'twas a famous victory."

"My father lived at Blenheim then,
  Yon little stream hard by;

They burned his dwelling to the ground,
  And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
  Nor had he where to rest his head.

"With fire and sword the country round
  Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
  And new-born baby, died;
But things like that, you know, must be
  At every famous victory.

"They say it was a choking sight
  After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
  Lay rotting in the sun:
But things like that, you know, must be
  After a famous victory.

"Great praise the Duke of Marlborough won
  And our good Prince Eugene."
"Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!"
  Said little Wilhelmine.
"Nay, nay, my little girl," quoth he,
  "It was a famous victory.

"And everybody praised the Duke,
  Who this great fight did win,"
"But what good came of it at last?"
  Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he;
  "But 'twas a famous victory."

ROBERT SOUTHEY

AT A WINDOW

GIVE me hunger,
O you gods that sit and give

The world its orders.
Give me hunger, pain and want,
Shut me out with shame and failure
From your doors of gold and fame,
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger!

But leave me a little love,
A voice to speak to me in the day end,
A hand to touch me in the dark room
Breaking the long loneliness.

In the dusk of day-shapes
Blurring the sunset,
One little wandering, western star
Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow.
Let me go to the window,
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk,
And wait and know the coming
Of a little love.

CARL SANDBURG

KILLERS

I AM singing to you
Soft as a man with a dead child speaks;
Hard as a man in handcuffs,
Held where he can not move:

Under the sun
Are sixteen million men,
Chosen for shining teeth,
Sharp eyes, hard legs,
And running of young warm blood in their wrists.
And a red juice runs on the green grass;
And a red juice soaks the dark soil.
And the sixteen million are killing . . . and killing and killing.

I never forget them day or night;
They beat on my head for memory of them;

They pound on my heart and I cry back to them;
To their homes, and women, dreams and games.

I wake in the night and smell the trenches,
And hear the low stir of sleepers in lines—
Sixteen million sleepers and pickets in the dark:
Some of them long sleepers for always,
Some of them tumbling to sleep to-morrow for always,
Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak,
Eating and drinking, toiling . . . on a long job of killing.
Sixteen million men.

CARL SANDBURG

CHICAGO

HOG-BUTCHER for the World,
Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked, and I answer, Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is, On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of youth; halfnaked, sweating, proud to be Hog-butcher, Tool-maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads, and Freight-handler to the Nation.

CARL SANDBURG

MY NOVEMBER GUEST

MY SORROW, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow;
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

ROBERT FROST

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

ROBERT FROST

THE SWING

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside—

Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown—

Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

BED IN SUMMER

IN WINTER I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

THE WIND

I SAW you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long!
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid,
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?

Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live, gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

A SPRING WISH

A FROG'S a very happy thing,
Cool and green in early spring,
Quick and silver through the pool
With no thought of books or school.

Oh, I want to be a frog—
Sunning, stretching on a log,
Blinking there in splendid ease,
Swimming naked when I please.

Nosing into magic nooks,
Quiet marshes, noisy brooks—
Free! and fit for anything—
Oh, to be a frog in spring!

JOHN CHIPMAN FARRAR

TIPPERARY IN THE SPRING

Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the springtime of the year,
When the hawthorn's whiter than the snow,
When the feathered folk assemble, and the air is all a-tremble
With their singing and their winging to and fro:
When queenly Slieve-na-mon puts her verdant vesture on,
And smiles to hear the news the breezes bring,
And the sun begins to glance on the rivulets that dance—
Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the Spring.

Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the springtime of the year,
When mists are rising from the lea,
When the Golden Vale is smiling with a beauty all beguiling
And the Suir[1] goes crooning to the sea;
And the shadows and the showers only multiply the flowers
That the lavish hand of May will fling;
Where in unfrequented ways, fairy music softly plays—
Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the Spring!

Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the springtime of the year,
When life like the year is young,
When the soul is just awaking like a lily blossom breaking,
And love words linger on the tongue;
When the blue of Irish skies is the hue of Irish eyes,
And love dreams cluster and cling
Round the heart and round the brain, half of pleasure, half of pain—
Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the Spring.

Denis A. McCarthy

THE FIELD OF BALLYCLARE

I've known the Spring in England—
  And, oh, 't is pleasant there
When all the buds are breaking
  And all the land is fair!
But all the time the heart of me,
The better, sweeter part of me,

[1] Pronounced Shure

Was sobbin' for the robin
In the fields o' Ballyclare!

I've known the Spring in England—
And, oh, 't is England's fair!
With Springtime in her beauty,
A queen beyond compare!
But all the while the soul of me,
Beyond the poor control of me,
Was sighin' to be flyin'
To the fields of Ballyclare!

I've known the Spring in England—
And now I know it here;
This many a month I've longed for
The openin' of the year.
But, ah, the Irish mind of me
(I hope 't is not unkind of me)
Is turnin' back and yearnin'
To the fields of Ballyclare!

DENIS A. MCCARTHY

MEMORIES OF IRELAND

I SEE in dreams a purple mountain rise
Above a verdant vale,
Across the azure stretches of the skies
I see the cloud-ships sail.

A river rippled by a wandering wind
Sighs mournfully along,
As if its water grieved to leave behind
The beauties that here throng.

And this is home, thus pictured in my dreams,
This hill is Slieve-ne-mon;
And this the Suir, the queen of all the streams
The sunlight plays upon.

This is the summer sky of bygone days
That on my youthhood smiled,

And this the Golden Valley, through whose ways
I wandered when a child.

Oh, dear dream-pictures of my native Isle
Across the spreading seas,
You give me grief—you give me joy the while,—
Oh, sad, sweet memories!

For, as in Ireland, through the blinding rain
The sun's bright rays are cast;
So pleasure mingles in my heart with pain
Remembering the past!

DENIS A. MCCARTHY

IN SERVICE

LITTLE Nellie Cassidy has got a place in town,
She wears a fine white apron,
She wears a new black gown,
An' the quarest little cap at all with straymers hanging down.

I met her one fine evening stravagin' down the street,
A feathered hat upon her head,
And boots upon her feet.
"Och, Mick," says she, "may God be praised that you and I should meet.

"It's lonesome in the city with such a crowd," says she;
"I'm lost without the bog-land,
I'm lost without the sea,
An' the harbour an' the fishing-boats that sail out fine and free.

"I'd give a golden guinea to stand upon the shore,
To see the big waves lepping,
To hear them splash and roar,
To smell the tar and the drying nets, I'd not be asking more.

"To see the small white houses, their faces to the sea,

The childher in the doorway,
Or round my mother's knee;
For I'm strange and lonesome missing them, God keep them all," says she.
Little Nellie Cassidy earns fourteen pounds and more,
Waiting on the quality,
And answering the door—
But her heart is some place far away upon the Wexford shore.

WINIFRED M. LETTS

SCHOLARS

IT IS pity I have,
And that is a truth,
For the Trinity men
And the men of Maynooth.

The men of Maynooth are the like o' the rooks,
With their solemn black coats an' their serious looks.
An' the Trinity men are no better at all,
For when they're not studyin' deep in their books
Their only diversion is batting a ball,
An' that is a truth.

If myself now were there
My heart would be broke,
For the smell o' the earth
Or a whiff of peat smoke.

The weight of their learning would sure have me bet,
I'd sell all their books for an old fishing net,
And pawn their professors for Danny's young horse.
Och! glory to goodness, I'd pine and I'd fret
For the mountainy wind an' the smell o' the gorse,
An' that is a truth.

It's the old ones that's there,
They'd ask a poor lad
To be searching his mind

For what knowledge he had.
For learning in poaching they'd give me small thanks,
Or for tricks to catch trout hidden under the banks.
There's much I could tell them of grouse and of hare,
But still they'd not bid me to enter their ranks,
An' faith! I'm not wishful to be with them there,
An' that is a truth.

WINIFRED M. LETTS

MIA CARLOTTA

GIUSEPPE, da barber, ess greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ess walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seelly young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—

You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

T. A. Daly

BETWEEN TWO LOVES

I GOTTA lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gona do?

O! Angela ees pretta girl,
She gotta hair so black, so curl,
An' teeth so white as anytheeng.
An' O! she gotta voice to seeng,
Dat mak' your hearta feel eet must
Jump up an' dance or eet weel bust.
An' alla time she seeng, her eyes
Dey smila like Italia's skies,
An' makin' flirtin' looks at you—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

Carlotta ees no gotta song,
But she ees twice so big an' strong
As Angela, an' she no look
So beautiful—but she can cook.
You oughta see her carry wood!
I tal you w'at, eet do you good.
When she ees be som'body's wife
She worka hard, you bat my life!
She never gattin' tired, too—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

O! my! I weesh dat Angela
Was strong for carry wood,
Or else Carlotta gotta song
An' looka pretta good.
I gotta lov' for Angela,

I lov' Carlotta, too,
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gona do?

T. A. Daly

AN ITALIAN LESSON

Eef you would be, O! 'Merican,
Wise Dagoman like me
An' call een good Italian
Da names of theengs you see,
Com', lees'en! an' I tal you true
How easy theeng eet ees to do.
For firsta lesson, now, su'pose
We taka som'theeng sweet;
Dere eesa flower you calla "rose,"
But w'tat's my name for eet?
I mak' eet verra plain to you,
For here ees all you gotta do:

Say, 'Angela!" jus' "Angela!"
An eef you catcha sight
Of pretta face an' shinin' eyes
Dat smila like Italia's skies,
You bat my life you weell be wise
An, justa wheesper "Angela!"
An' sure you weell be right.

Eef you would know Italian
For sweeta theengs you hear,
Here's wise Italian teacher-man
Dat mak' eet plain an' clear.
Com', lees'en! an' I tal you true
How easy theeng eet ees to do.
Dere eesa bird dat seeng so sweet—
No sweeter song could be;
"Thrush" ees da word you say for eet?
Dat's not da word for me.

You like to know Italian word
I speaka for dees songa-bird?

Say "Angela!" jus' "Angela!"
An' eef so be you might
Have happiness for standin' near
W'en sounds wan voice so sweet an' clear
You theenk eet ees a thrush you hear,
Say "Angela!" jus' "Angela!"
An' sure you weell be right.

T. A. Daly

OLD FOLKS AT HOME

Way down upon de Swanee Ribber,
Far, far away,
Dere's wha my heart is turning ebber,
Dere's wha de old folks stay.
All up and down de whole creation
Sadly I roam,
Still longing for de old plantation,
And for de old folks at home.

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam;
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home!

All round de little farm I wandered
When I was young,
Den many happy days I squandered,
Many de songs I sung.
When I was playing wid my brother
Happy was I;
Oh, take me to my kind old mudder!
Dere let me live and die.

One little hut among de bushes,
One dat I love,

Still sadly to my memory rushes,
No matter where I rove.
When will I see de bees a-humming
All round de comb?
When will I hear de banjo tumming,
Down in my good old home?

All de world am sad and dreary,
Eberywhere I roam,
Oh, darkeys, how my heart grows weary,
Far from de old folks at home.

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME

THE sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home;
'Tis summer, the darkeys are gay;
The corn-top's ripe, and the meadow's in the bloom,
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright;
By-'n'-by hard times comes a-knocking at the door:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more today!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

They hunt no more for the posum and the coon,
On the meadow, the hill, and the shore;
They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon,
On the bench by the old cabin door.
The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart,
With sorror, where all was delight;
The time has come when the darkeys have to part:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good night!

The head must bow, and the back will have to bend,
Wherever the darkey may go;
A few more days, and the trouble all will end,
In the field where the sugar-canes grow.
A few more days for to tote the weary load,—
No matter, 'twill never be light;
A few more days till we totter on the road:—
Then my old Kentucky home, good night!

Weep no more, my lady,
O, weep no more today!
We will sing one song for the old Kentucky home,
For the old Kentucky home, far away.

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

'O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

'I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too!'

'I met a lad yin the meads,
Full beautiful—faery's child
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

'I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;

She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

'I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

'She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said
"I love thee true."

'She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

'And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

'I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
They cried—"La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

'I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.

'And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.'

JOHN KEATS

CARCASSONNE

"How old I am! I'm eight years!
I've worked both hard and long;
Yet patient as my life has been,
One dearest sight I have not seen,—
It almost seems a wrong.
A dream I had when life was new;
Alas, our dreams! they come not true;
I thought to see fair Carcassonne,—
That lovely city,—Carcassonne!

"One sees it dimly from the height
Beyond the mountains blue.
Fain would I walk five weary leagues;
I do not mind the road's fatigues,
Through morn and evening's dew;
But bitter frost would fall at night;
And on the grapes,—That yellow blight!
I could not go to Carcassonne,
I never went to Carcassonne.

"They say it is agay all times
As holidays at home;
The gentiles ride in gay attire,
And in the sun each gilded spire
Shoots up like those in Rome;
The bishop the procession leads,
The generals curb their prancing steeds.
Alas! I know not Carcassonne,
Alas! I saw not Carcassonne!

"Our vicar's right; he preaches loud
And bids us to beware;
He says, 'O guard the weakest part,
And most that traitor in the heart,
Against ambition's snare.'

Perhaps in autumn I can find
Two sunny days with gentle wind;
I then could go to Carcassonne,
I still could go to Carcassonne.

"My God, my Father, pardon me
If this my wish offends;
One sees some hope more high than his,
In age, as in his infancy,
To which his heart ascends.
My wife, my son have seen Narbonne,
My grandson went to Perpignan;
But I have not seen Carcassonne,
But I have not seen Carcassonne."

Thus sighed a peasant bent with age,
Half seated in his chair;
I said "My friend, come go with me
Tomorrow, then thine eyes shall see
Those streets that seem so fair."
That night there came for passing soul
The church-bell's low and solemn toll.
He never saw gay Carcassonne.
Who has not known a Carcassonne?

GUSTAV NADAUD

DOORS

LIKE a young child who to his mother's door
Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel—so before
A door that will not open, sick and numb,
I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing—hark!—
Down the fair-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

HERMAN HAGEDORN

THE WILD RIDE

I HEAR in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! but alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal and entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty:
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung between the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lies the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night tide dashin'
He sees it arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port of Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drunimed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung between the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
They shall find him ware an' wakin,' as they found him long ago.

Henry Newbolt

THE BACCHANTE TO HER BABE

Come, sprite, and dance! The sun is up,
The wind runs laughing down the sky
That brims with morning like a cup.
Sprite, we must race him,
We must chase him—
You and I!
And skim across the fuzzy heather—

You and joy and I together
Whirling by!

You merry little roll of fat!—
Made warm to kiss, and smooth to pat,
And round to toy with, like a cub;
To put one's nozzle in a rub
And breathe you in like breath of kine,
Like juice of vine,
That sets my morning heart a-tingling,
Dancing, jingling,
All the glad abandon mingling
Of wind and wine!

Sprite, you are love, and you are joy,
A happiness, a dream, a toy,
A god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
The sun come down in tangled gold,
The moon to kiss, and spring to hold,

There was a time once, long ago,
Long—oh, long since . . . . I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot . . . .
There was a time when you were not,
You merry sprite, save as a strain,
The strange dull pain
Of green buds swelling
In warm, straight dwelling
That must burst to the April rain.
A little heavy I was then,
And dull—and glad to rest. And when
The travail came
In searing flame . . . .
But, sprite, that was so long ago!—
A century!—I scarcely know.
Almost I had forgot
When you were not.

So, little sprite, come dance with me!
The sun is up, the wind is free!
Come now and trip it,
Romp and skip it,
Earth is young and so are we.
Sprite, you and I will dance together
On the heather,
Glad with all the procreant earth,
With all the fruitage of the trees,
And golden pollen on the breeze,
With plants that bring the grain to birth,
With beast and bird,
Feathered and furred,
With youth and hope and life and love,
And joy thereof—
While we are part of all, we two—
For my glad burgeoning in you!

So, merry little roll of fat,
Made warm to kiss and smooth to pat
And round to toy with like a cub,
To put one's nozzle in and rub,
My god to laugh with,
Love to chaff with,
Come and dance beneath the sky,
You and I!
Look out with those round wondering eyes,
And squirm, and gurgle—and grow wise!

EUNICE TIETJENS

THE BARREL-ORGAN
(Condensed)

THERE's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And filled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;

And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon.
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets.

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the lights and ranges
Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colours it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—a dance!—

Go down to Kew[1] in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!

The cherry trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London)!

[1] The famous botanical gardens near London.

And there they say, when dawn is nigh and all the world's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London)!
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-wit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London)!
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorusing for London:—

"Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!"

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street
In the city as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red

As he sees a loafer watching him and—there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
As it dies into the sunset glow.
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

"Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland,
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London)!"

ALFRED NOYES

PATTERNS

I WALK down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing,—and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

My dress is richly figured,
And the train
Makes a pink and silver stain
On the gravel, and the thrift
Of the borders.

Just a plate of current fashion,
Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
Not a softness anywhere about me,
Only whale-bone and brocade.
And I sink on a seat in the shade
Of a lime tree. For my passion
Wars against the stiff brocade.
The daffodils and squills
Flutter in the breeze
As they please.
And I weep;
For the lime tree is in blossom
And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
In the marble fountain
Comes down the garden paths.
The dripping never stops.
Underneath my stiffened gown
Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,
A basin in the midst of the hedges grown
So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
But she guesses he is near,
And the sliding of the water
Seems the stroking of a dear
Hand upon her.
What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.
All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
And he would stumble after,
Bewildered by my laughter.
I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles
on his shoes.
I would choose
To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,

A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover,
Till he caught me in the shade,
And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me.
Aching, melting, unafraid.
With the shadows of the leaves and the sundrops,
And the plopping of the waterdrops,
All about us in the open afternoon—
I am very like to swoon
With the weight of this brocade,
For the sun shifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom
In my bosom,
Is a letter I have hid.
It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the Duke.
"Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell
Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
The letters squirmed like snakes.
"Any answer Madam?" said my footman.
"No," I told him.
"See that the messenger takes some refreshment.
No, no answer."
And I walked into the garden,
Up and down the patterned paths,
In my stiff, correct brocade.
The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,
Each one.
I stood upright too,
Held rigid to the pattern
By the stiffness of my gown.
Up and down I walked,
Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
In a month, here, underneath this lime,
We would have broke the pattern;

He for me, and I for him,
He as Colonel, I as Lady,
On this shady seat.
He had a whim
That sunlight carried blessing.
And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

AMY LOWELL

HANNAH BINDING SHOES

Poor lone Hannah,
Sitting at the window, binding shoes:
Faded, wrinkled,
Sitting, stitching, in a mournful muse.
Bright-eyed beauty once was she,
When the bloom was on the tree;—
Spring and winter,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Not a neighbor
Passing, nod or answer will refuse
To her whisper,
"Is there from the fishers any news?"
Oh, her heart's adrift with one
On an endless voyage gone;—
Night and morning,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Fair young Hannah,
Ben, the sunburnt fisher, gaily wooes;
Hale and clever,
For a willing heart and hand he sues.
May-day skies are all aglow,
And the waves are laughing so!
For her wedding
Hannah leaves her window and her shoes.

May is passing;
'Mid the apple-boughs a pigeon cooes:
Hannah shudders,
For the mild south-wester mischief brews.
Round the rocks of Marblehead,
Outward bound, a schooner sped;
Silent, lonesome,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

'Tis November:
Now no tear her wasted cheek bedews,
From Newfoundland
Not a sail returning will she lose
Whispering hoarsely: "Fisherman,
Have you, have you heard of Ben?"
Old with watching,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Twenty winters
Bleak and drear the ragged shore she views.

Twenty seasons:—
Never one has brought her any news.
Still her dim eyes silently
Chase the white sails o'er the sea;—
Hopeless, faithful,
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

LUCY LARCOM

TELLING THE BEES

HERE is the place; right over the hill
Runs the path I took;
You can see the gap in the old wall still,
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattleyard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

A year has gone, as the tortoise goes.
Heavy and slow;
And the same rose blows, and the same sun glows,
And the same brook sings of a year ago.

There's the same sweet clover-smell in the breeze;
And the June sun warm
Tangles his wings of fire in the trees,
Setting, as then, over Fernside farm.

I mind me how with a lover's care
From my Sunday coat

I brushed off the burrs, and smoothed my hair,
And cooled at the brookside my brow and throat.

Since we parted, a month had passed
To love, a year;
Down through the beeches I looked at last
On the little red gate and the well-sweep near.

I can see it all now,—the slantwise rain
Of light through the leaves,
The sundown's blaze on her window-pane,
The bloom of her roses under the eaves.

Just the same as a month before,—
The house and the trees,
The barn's brown gable, the vine by the door,—
Nothing changed but the hives of bees.

Before them, under the garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black.

Trembling, I listened: the summer sun
Had the chill of snow;
For I knew she was telling the bees of one
Gone on the journey we all must go!

Then I said to myself, "My Mary weeps
For the dead to-day:
Haply her blind old grandsire sleeps
The fret and the pain of his age away."

But her dog whined low; on the doorway sill,
With his cane to his chin,
The old man sat; and the chore-girl still
Sung to the bees stealing out and in.

And the song she was singing ever since
In my ear sounds on:—
"Stay at home, pretty bees, fly not hence!
Mistress Mary is dead and gone!"

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve.
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin,
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirrow shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank:
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
  Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
  The ruffled silence spread again
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
  Her needles, as she laid them down,
  Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled: no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
  So, as said angel, she did say;
  Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
  There was a pushing back of chairs
  As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
  Our mother went where Margaret lay,
  Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they
Have broken her long watched for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned;
  But suddenly turned back again;
  And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
  And held my breath, and spoke no word;
  There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept;
  And both my arms fell, and I said,

"God knows I knew that she was dead."
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

JENNY KISSED ME

JENNY kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief! who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say, I'm weary, say I'm sad;
Say that health and wealth have missed me;
Say I'm growing old, but add—
Jenny kissed me!

LEIGH HUNT

THREE KISSES

FIRST time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
Slow to world greetings, quick with its "Oh, list,"
When angels speak. A ring of amethyst,
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss.
The second passed in height the first,
And sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, "My love, my own."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

LOVE RETRIEVES

My own beloved, who has lifted me
From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown,
And in betwixt the languid ringlets blown a life-breath,
Till the forehead hopefully shines out again,
As all the angels see, before thy saving kiss!
My own, my own!
Who came to me when all the world was gone,
And I who looked for only God, found thee!
I find thee; I am safe, and strong, and glad.
As one who stands in dewless asphodel,
Looks backward on the tedious time he had
In the upper life,—so I, with bosom-swell,
Make witness, here, between the good and bad,
That love, as strong as death, retrieves as well.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

FIRST FIG

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
It gives a lovely light!

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wild gray skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with color! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, world, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all
But never knew I this.
Here such a passion is

As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

ASHES OF LIFE

LOVE has gone and left me, and the days are all alike.
Eat I must, and sleep I must—and would that night were here!
But ah, to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!
Would that it were day again, with twilight near!

Love has gone and left me, and I don't know what to do!
This or that or what you will is all the same to me;
But all the things that I begin I leave before I'm through—
There's little use in anything as far as I can see.

Love has gone and left me, and the neighbors knock and borrow,
And life goes on forever like the gnawing of a mouse.
And to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
There's this little street and this little house.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

VAIN KISSES

TAKE, O take those lips away
That so sweetly were forsworn,
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again—
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain,
Seal'd in vain!

SHAKESPEARE

O MISTRESS MINE

O MISTRESS mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear! your true-love's coming

That can sing both high and low;
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting—
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty,—
Then come kiss me, Sweet-and-twenty,
Youth's stuff will not endure.

SHAKESPEARE

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

CRABBED Age and Youth
Cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather,
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare:
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short,
Youth is nimble, Age is lame;
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold,
Youth is wild, and Age is tame:—
Age, I do abhor thee,
Youth, I do adore thee;
O' my Love, my Love is young!
Age, I do defy thee—
O sweet shepherd, hie thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

SHAKESPEARE

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.
Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

SHAKESPEARE

COME AWAY, DEATH

Come away, come away, Death,
And in sad cypres let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown;

Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

SHAKESPEARE

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

ALL the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.
At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms,
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.
And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.
Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like a pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth.
And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part.
The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
His youthful hose wellsaved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish treble,
Pipes and whistles in his sound.
Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

JAQUES

O THAT I WERE A FOOL

A FOOL, a fool! I met a fool in the forest,
A motley fool!—a miserable world!—
As I do live by food, I met a fool;
Who laid him down and basked him in the sun,
And railed on Lady Fortune in good terms,
In good set terms, and yet a motley fool.
"Good Morrow, fool," quoth I.
"No sir," quoth he, "call me not fool
Till heaven hath sent me fortune."
And then he drew a dial from his poke,
And, looking at it with lack-luster eye,
Says very wisely, "It is ten o'clock;
Thus we may see," quoth he, "how the world wags.
'T is but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more 't will be eleven;
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale."
When I did hear the motley fool
Thus moral on the time,
My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
That fools should be so deep contemplative;
And I did laugh, sans intermission,
An hour by his dial.
O noble fool! O worthy fool!
Motley's the only wear.
O that I were a fool!

JAQUES

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

THE quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the heart of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

PORTIA

MUSIC AND THE STARS

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sound of music
Creep into our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

LORENZO

GOOD NAME

GOOD name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

IAGO

IT WILL FEED MY REVENGE

HE HATH disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains; scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what is his reason? I am a Jew.

Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimentions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why revenge. The villany you teach me, I shall execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.

SHYLOCK

THE MAN WITH THE HOE[1]

BOWED by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,

[1] Written after seeing Millet's world-famous painting.

Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And markt their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the caverns of Hell to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More packt with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Thru this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Thru this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Powers that made the world,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;

Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,
After the silence of the centuries?

EDWIN MARKHAM

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE[1]

WHEN the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy,
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears
Then mixt a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—behind the mortal vail.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth,
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff,
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves,
The friendly welcome of the wayside well,

[1] Dr. Henry van Dyke of Princeton says: "Edwin Markham's Lincoln is the greatest poem ever written on the immortal martyr."

The courage of the bird that dares the sea,
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn,
The pity of the snow that hides all scars,
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock,
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West.
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve—
To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spikt again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise—
Towering in calm rough-hewn sublimity.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,

Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

EDWIN MARKHAM

A SUMMER'S NIGHT

THE night is dewy as a maiden's mouth,
The skies are bright as are a maiden's eyes,
Soft as a maiden's breath the wind that flies
Up from the perfumed bosom of the South.

Like sentinels, the pines stand in the park;
And hither hastening, like rakes that roam,
With lamps to light their wayward footsteps home,
The fireflies come stagg'ring down the dark.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

LOVE'S APOTHEOSIS

(Condensed)

LOVE me! I care not what the circling years
To me may do;
If, but in spite of time and tears,
You prove but true.

Love me! Albeit grief shall dim mine eyes,
And tears bedew,
I shall not e'en complain, for then my skies
Shall still be blue.

Love, me! and though the winter snow shall pile,
And leave me chill,
Thy passion's warmth shall make for me, meanwhile,
A sun-kissed hill.

Love me! and let my life take up thine own,
As sun the dew.
Come, sit, my queen! for in my heart a throne
Awaits for you.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

SONG OF SUMMER

Dis is gospel wheathah sho'—
  Hills is swat o' hazy,
Meddahs level ez a flo'
  Callin' to de lazy,
Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,
  Sunshine softly gleamin'
D' aint no wuk hit's right to do,
  Nothin's right but dreamin'.

Dreamin' by de rivah side
  Wif de watahs glistenin'
Feelin' good an' satisfied
  Ez you lay a-listenin'
To de little nakid boys
  Splashin' in de watah,
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys
  Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,
  So's to hide an' view you;
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin' crows
  Shoutin' hallelujah.
Peckawood er pon de tree
  Tappin' lak a hammah;
Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,
  Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wif perfume,
  Jes' enough to tease you;
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,
  Smellin' fu' to please you.
Go 'way folks, and let me 'lone,
  Times is gettin' dearah,—
Summah's settin' on de th'one,
And I'm a-layin' neah huh!

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

LI'L' GAL

Oh, de weathah it is balmy an' de breeze
is sighin' low
Li'l' gal,
An' de mockin' bird is singin' in de locus' by
de do',
Li'l' gal;
Dere's a hummin' an' a bummin' in de lan'
from eas' to wes'
I's a-sighin' fu' you, honey, an' I nevah know no
res'.
Fu' dey's lots o' trouble brewin' an' a-stewin'
in my breas',
Li'l' gal.

Whut's de mattah wid de weathah, whut's de
mattah wid de breeze,
Li'l' gal?
Whut's de mattah wid de locus' dat's a-singin'
in de trees,
Li'l' gal?
W'y dey knows dey ladies love 'em, an' dey
knows dey love 'em true,
An' dey love 'em back, I reckon, des' lak I's
a-lovin' you;
Dat's de reason dey's a-weavin' an' a-sighin',
thoo an' thoo,
Li'l' gal.

Don't you let no da'ky fool you 'cause de
clo'es he waihs is fine,
Li'l' gal
Dey's a hones' hea't a-beatin' unnerneaf dese
rags o' mine,
Li'l' gal.
C'ose day ain' no use in mockin' whut de birds
an' weathah do,

But I's so'y I cain't 'spress it w'en I knows I
loves you true,
Dat's de reason I's a-sighin' an' a-singin' now
fu' you,
Li'l' gal.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

A NEGRO LOVE SONG

SEEN my lady home las' night,
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Hel' huh han' an' sque'z it tight,
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Hyeahd huh sigh a little sigh,
Seen a light gleam f'om huh eye,
An' a smile go flittin' by—
Jump back, honey, jump back.

Hyeahd de win' blow thoo de pine,
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Mockin'-bird was singin' fine,
Jump back, honey, jump back.
An' my hea't was beatin' so,
When I reached my lady's do',
Dat I couldn't ba' to go—
Jump back, honey, jump back.

Put my ahm aroun' huh wais',
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Raised huh lips an' took a tase,
Jump back, honey, jump back.
Love me, honey, love me true?
Love me well ez I love you?
An' she answe'd, "'Cose I do"—
Jump back, honey, jump back.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

DISCOVERED

Seen you down, at chu'ch las' night,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you don, I seen;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Say now, honey, wha'd he say?—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me an' I'm yo' pal—
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too, huh name is Sal;
  Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

IN THE MORNING

Lias! Lias! Bless de Lawd!
Don' you know de day's erbroad?
Ef you don' git up, you scamp,
Dey'll be trouble in dis camp.
T'ink I gwin to let you sleep
W'ile I meks yo' boa'd an' keep?

Dat's a putty howdy-do—
Don' you hyeah me, 'Lias—you?

Bet ef I come crost dis flo'
You won' fin' no time to sno'.
Daylight all a-shinin' in
W'le you sleep—w'y hit's a sin!
Ain't de can'le-light enough
To bu'n out widout a snuff,
But you go de mo'nin' thoo
Bu'nin' up de daylight too?

'Lias, don't you hyeah me call?
No use tu'nin' to'ds de wall;
I kin hyeah dat mattuss squeak;
Don' you hyeah me w'en I speak?
Dis hyeah clock done struck off six—
Ca'line, bring me dem ah sticks!
Oh, you down, suh; huh! you down—
Look hyeah, don' you daih to frown.

Ma'ch yo'se'f an' wash yo' face,
Don' you splattah all de place;
I got some'pn else to do,
'Sides jes' cleanin' aftah you.
Tek dat comb an' fix yo' haid—
Looks jes' lak a feddah baid.
Look hyeah, boy, I let you see
You sha'n't roll yo' eyes at me.

Come hyeah; bring me dat an strap!
Boy, I'll whup you 'twell you drap;
You done felt yo'se'f too strong,
An' you sholy got me wrong.
Set down at dat table thaih;
Jes' you whimpah ef you daih!
Evah mo'nin' on dis place,
Seem lak I mus' lose my grace.

Fol' yo' han's bow yo' haid—
Wait ontwell de blessin' 's said;
"Lawd, have mussy on ouah souls—"
(Don' you daih to tech dem rolls—)
"Bless de food we gwine to eat—"
(You set still—I see yo' feet;
You jes' try dat trick agin!)
"Gin us peace an' joy, Amen!"

THE BOOGAH MAN

W'EN de evenin' shadders
  Come a-glidin' down,
Fallin' black an' heavy
  Ovah hill an' town,
Ef you listen keerful,
  Keerful ez you kin,
So's you boun' to notice
  Des a drappin' pin;
Den you'll hyeah a funny
  Soun' ercross de lan';
Lay low; dat's de callin'
  Of de Boogah Man!

Woo-oo, woo-oo!
  Hyeah him ez he go erlong de way;
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
  Don' you wish de night 'ud tu'n to day?
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
  Hide yo' little peepers 'hind yo' han';
Woo-oo, woo-oo!
  Callin' of de Boogah Man.

W'en de win's a-shiverin'
  Thoo de gloomy lane,
An' dey comes de patterin'
  Of de evenin' rain,

W'en de owl's a-hootin',
  Out daih in de wood,
Don' you wish, my honey,
  Dat you had been good?
'Tain't no use to try to
  Snuggle up to Dan;
Bless you, dat's de callin'
  Of de Boogah Man!

Ef you loves yo' mammy,
  An' you min's yo' pap,
Ef you nevah wriggles
  Outen Sukey's lap;
Ef you says yo' "Lay me"
  Evah single night
'Fo' dey tucks de kivers
  An' puts out de light,
Den de rain kin pattah,
  Win' blow lak a fan,
But you need n' bothah
  'Bout de Boogah Man!

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

ACCOUNTABILITY

FOLKS ain't got no right to censuah othah folks about dey habits;
Him dat giv' de squir'ls de bushtails made de bobtails fu' de rabbits.
Him dat built de gread big mountains hollered out de little valleys,
Him dat made de streets an' driveways wasn't shamed to make de alleys.

We is all constructed diff'ent, d'ain't no two of us de same,
We cain't he'p ouah likes an' dislikes, ef we'se bad we ain't to blame.
Ef we'se good, we needn't show off, case you bet it ain't ouah doin'
We gits into su'ttain channels dat we jus' cain't he'p pu'suin'.

But we all fits into places dat no othah ones could fill,
An' we does the things we has to, big er little, good er ill.

John cain't tek de place o' Henry, Su an' Sally ain't alike;
Bass ain't nuthin' like a suckah, chub ain't nuthin' like a pike.

When you come to think about it, how it's all planned out it's splendid.
Nuthin's done er evah happens, 'dout hit's somefin' dat's intended;
Don't keer whut you does, you has to, an' hit sholy beats de dickens,—
Viney, go put on de kittle, I got one o' mastah's chickens.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

ENCOURAGEMENT

WHO dat knockin' at de do'?
Why, Ike Johnson,—yes, fu' sho!
Come in, Ike. I's mighty glad
You come down. I t'ought you's mad
At me 'bout de othah night,
An' was stayin' 'way fu' spite.
Say, now, was you mad fu' true
W'en I kin' o' laughed at you?
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

'Tain't no use a-lookin' sad,
An' a-mekin' out you's mad;
Ef you's gwine to be so glum,
Wondah why you evah come.
I don't lak nobidy 'roun'
Dat jes' shet dey mouf an' frown,—
Oh, now, man, don't act a dunce!
Cain't you talk? I tol' you once,
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

Wha'd you come hyeah fu' to-night?
Body'd t'ink yo' haid ain't right.
I's done all dat I kin do,—
Dressed perticular, jes' fu' you;
Reckon I'd 'a' bettah wo'
My ol' ragged calico.
Aftah all de pains I's took

Cain't you tell me how I look?
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

Bless my soul! I mos' fu'got
Tellin' you 'bout Tildy Scott.
Don't you know, come Thu'sday night,
She gwine ma'y Lucius White?
Miss Lize say I allus wuh
Heap sight laklier 'n huh;
An' she'll git me somep'n new,
Ef I wants to ma'y too.
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

I could ma'y in a week,
Ef de man I wants 'ud speak.
Tildy's presents'll be fine,
But day wouldn't ekal mine.
Him whut gits me fu' a wife
'll be proud, you bet yo' life.
I's had offers; some ain't quit;
But I hasn't ma'ied yit!
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

Ike, I loves you,—yes, I does;
You's my choice, and allus was.
Laffin' at you ain't no harm.—
Go 'way, dahky, whah's you' arm?
Hug me closer—dah, dat's right!
Wasn't you a awful sight,
Havin' me to baig you so?
Now ax whut you want to know,—
Speak up, Ike, an' 'spress yo'se'f.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

'LONG TO'DS NIGHT

DAIH's a moughty soothin' feelin'
Hits a dahky man,

'Long to'ds night.
W'en de row is mos' nigh ended,
Den he stops to fan,
'Long to'ds night.
De blue smoke f'om his cabin is a-calling to him, "Come";
He smells de bacon cookin', an' he hyeah de fiah hum;
An' he 'mence to sing, 'dough wo'kin' putty night done made him dumb,
'Long to'ds night.

Wid his hoe erpon his shouldah
Den he goes erlong,
'Long to'ds night.
An' he keepin' time a-steppin'
Wid a little song,
'Long to'ds night.
De restin'-time's a-comin', an' de time to drink an' eat;
A baby's toddlin' to'ds him on hits little dusty feet,
An' a-goin' to'ds his cabin, an' his suppah's moughty sweet,
'Long to'ds night.

Daih his Ca'line min' de kettle,
Rufus min' de chile,
'Long to'ds night.
An' de sweat roll down his forred,
Mixin' wid his smile,
'Long to'ds night.
He toss his piccaninny, an' he hum a little chune;
De wo'kin' all is ovah, an' de suppah comin' soon;
De wo'kin' time's Decembah, but de restin' time is June
'Long to'ds night.

Dey's a kin' o' doleful feelin',
Hits a tendah place
'Long to'ds night.
Deys a moughty glory in him
Shinin' thoo his face,
'Long to'ds night.

De cabin's lak de big house, an' de fiah's lak de sun;
His wife look moughty lakly, an' de chile de puttiest one;
W'y hit's blessid, jes, a'livin' w'en a body's work is done.
'Long to'ds night.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

SHIPS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

OUT in the sky the great dark clouds are massing;
I look far out into the pregnant night,
Where I can hear a solemn booming gun
And catch the gleaming of a random light,
That tells me that the ship I seek is passing, passing.

My tearful eyes my soul's deep hurt are glassing;
For I would hail and check that ship of ships.
I stretch my hands imploring, cry aloud,
My voice falls dead a foot from mine own lips,
And but its ghost doth reach that vessel, passing, passing.

O Earth, O Sky, O Ocean, both surpassing,
O heart of mine, O soul that dreads the dark!
Is there no hope for me? Is there no way
That I may sight and check that speeding bark
Which out of sight and sound is passing, passing.

PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

AT AUNTY'S HOUSE

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's house—
'Way in the country!—where
They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—
An' all's outdoors an' air!—
An' orchurd-swing; an' churry trees—
An' churries in 'em!—Yes, an' these—
Here redhead birds steals all they please,
An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—

W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,
  We et out on the porch!

Wite where the cellar door wuz shut
  The table wuz; an' I
Let Aunty set by me an cut
  My vittuls up—an' pie.
'Tus awful funny!—I could see
The redheads in the churry tree;
An' beehives, where you got to be
  So keerful, goin' by;—
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—
  We et out on the porch!

An' I ist et p'surves an' things
  'At Ma don't 'low me to—
An' chickun-gizzurds—(don't like wings
  Like Parunts does! do you?)
An' all the time the wind blowed there.
An' I could feel it in my hair,
An' ist smell clover ever'where!—
  An' a old redhead flew
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,
  When we et on the porch!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

MY PHILOSOFY

I AIN'T, ner don't p'tend to be,
Much posted on philosofy;
But thar is times, when all alone,
I work out idees of my own.
And of these same thare is a few
I'd like to jest refer to you—
Pervidin' that you don't object
To listen clos't and rickollect.

I allus argy that a man
Who does about the best he can

Is plenty good enough to suit
This lower mundane institute—
No matter ef his daily walk
Is subject fer his neighbor's talk,
And critic-minds of ev'ry whim
Jest all git up and go fer him!

I knowed a feller onc't that had
The yeller-janders mighty bad,—
And each and every friend he'd meet
Would stop and give him some receet
Fer cuorin' of 'em. But he'd say
He kindo' thought they'd go away
Without no medicin', and boast
That he'd git well without one doste.

He kep' a yellerin' on—and they
Perdictin' that he'd die some day
Before he knowed it! Tuck his bed,
The feller did, and lost his head,
And wundered in his mind a spell—
Then rallied, and, at last, got well;
But ev'ry friend that said he'd die
Went back on him eternally!

It's natchurl enugh, I guess,
When some gits more and some gits less,
Fer them-uns on the slimmest side
To claim it ain't fare divide;
And I've knowed some to lay and wait,
And git up soon, and set up late,
To ketch some feller they could hate
Fer goin' at a faster gait.

The signs is bad when folks commence
A-findin' fault with Providence,
And balkin' cause the earth don't shake

At ev'ry prancin' step they take.
No man is grate tel he can see
How less than little he would be
Ef stripped to self, and stark and bare
He hung his sign out anywhare.

My doctern is to lay aside
Contension, and be satisfied:
Jest do your best, and praise er blame
That follers that, counts jest the same.
I've allus noticed grate success,
Is mixed with troubles, more or less,
And it's the man who does the best
That gits more kicks than all the rest.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WET WEATHER TALK

IT HAIN'T no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men ginerly, to all intents—
Although they're apt to grumble some—
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,
And takes things as they come—
That is, the commonality
Of men that's lived as long as me
Has watched the world enough to learn
They're not the boss of this concern.

With some, of course, it's different—
I've saw young men that knowed it all.
And didn't like the way things went
On this terrestchul ball,—
But all the same, the rain, some way,

Rained jest as hard on picnic day;
Er, when they railly wanted it,
It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existunce, dry and wet
Will overtake the best of men—
Some little skift o' clouds'll shet
The sun off now and then.—
And mayby, whilse you're wundern who
You've fool-like lent your umbrell' to,
And want it—out'll pop the sun,
And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggervates the farmers, too—
They's too much wet, er too much sun,
Er work, er waitin' round to do
Before the plowin' 's done:
And mayby, like as not, the wheat,
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,
Will ketch the storm—and jest about
The time the corn's a-jintin' out.

These-here cy-clones a-foolin' round—
And back'ard crops!—and wind and rain!—
And yit the corn that's wallered down
May elbow up again!
They hain't no sense, as I can see,
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be
A-faultin' Natchur's wise intents,
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain.
W'y, rain's my choice.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more, no more!
I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make
It quit a-tall;
An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball
An' puncture it; an' Sis she take
An' poke my knife down through the stable-floor
An' loozed it—blame it all!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

An' Aunt Mame wrote she's comin', an' she can't —
Folks is come there!—An' I don't care
She is my Aunt!
An' my eyes stings; an' I'm
Ist coughin' all the time
An' hurts me so; an' where my side's so sore
Grampa felt where, an' he
Says 'Mayby it's pleurasy!"
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence
An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!
An' my fi'-cents
It sticked in my tin bank, and I ist tore
Purt' nigh my thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git
It out—nen smash it!—An' it's in ther yit!
But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so hot—
Ist like I run an' don't res' none
But ist run on when I ought to not;
Yes, an' my chin
An' lip's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—
An' they all hurt so!—
An' oh, my-oh!
I'm a-startin' ag'in—

I'm a-startin' ag'in, but I won't, fer shore!—
I ist ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

THE RAGGEDY MAN

O THE Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' water the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all 'st laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann,—
Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good,
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at boys can't do.—
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
An' 'nother 'n', too, for 'Lizabuth Ann—
An' 'nother 'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man one time say he
Pick' roast' rambos from a' orchurd-tree,
An' et 'em—all ist roast' an' hot!—
An's it's so, too!—'cause a corn-crib got
Afire one time an' all burn' down
On "The Smoot Farm," 'bout four mile from town—
On "The Smoot Farm"! Yes—an' the hired han'
'At worked there nen 'uz The Raggedy Man! —
Ain't he the beatin'est Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man's so good an' kind
He'll be our "horsey," an' "haw" an' mind
Ever'thing 'at you make him do—
An' won't run off—'less you want him to!
I drived him wunst way down our lane
An' he got skeered, when it 'menced to rain,
An' ist rared up an' squealed and run
Purt' nigh away!—an' it's all in fun!
Nen he skeered ag'in at a' old tin can. . . . .
Whoa! y' old runaway Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes,
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers the'rselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann!
Er Ma, er Pa, er The RaggedyMan!
Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' wunst, when The Raggedy Man come late,
An' pigs ist root' thue the garden-gate,
He 'tend like the pigs 'uz bears an' said,
"Old Bear-shooter'll shoot 'em dead!"
An' race' an' chase' 'em, an' they'd ist run
When he pint his hoe at 'em like it's a gun
An' go "Bang!—Bang!" nen 'tend he stan'
An' load up his gun ag'in! Raggedy Man!
He's an old Bear-shooter Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' sometimes The Raggedy Man lets on
We're little prince-children, an' old King's gone

To git more money, an' lef' us there—
An' Robbers is ist thick ever'where;
An' nen—ef we all won't cry, fer shore—
The Raggedy Man he'll come and "'splore
The Castul-halls," an' steal the "gold"—
An' steal us, too, an' grab an' hold
An' pack us off to his old "Cave"!—An'
Haymow's the "cave" o' The Raggedy Man!—
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time, when he
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,
Says "When you're big like your Pa is,
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what air you go' to be, goodness knows?"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says " 'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

PRELUDE

(To Departmental Ditties)

I HAVE eaten your bread and salt.
I have drunk your water and wine.
The deaths ye died I have watched beside,
And the lives ye led were mine.

Was there aught that I did not share
In vigil or toil or ease,—
One joy or woe that I did not know,
Dear hearts across the seas?

I have written the tale of our life
For a sheltered people's mirth,

In jesting guise—but ye are wise,
And ye know what the jest is worth.

RUDYARD KIPLING

GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin and beer[1]
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;[2]
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in India's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them blackfaced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti,[3] Gunga Din.
He was "Din! Din! Din!
You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! Slippy hitherao!
Water, get it! Panee lao[4]
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An 'rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl.
We shouted "Harry By![5]

[1] Boast of capacity to drink.
[2] Practice soldiering at the drill-camp at Aldershot.
[3] Water-carrier.
[4] Hurry up.
[5] Come on, Water-boy.

Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some juldee[6] in it
Or I'll marrow[7] you this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done;
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick[8] on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire"
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green
When the cartridges ran out,
You could hear the front-ranks shout,
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' he plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water green.

[6] Make it snappy—hurry.
[7] Break your bones.
[8] Water-bag.

It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
    It was "Din! Din! Din!
  'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
  'E's chawin' up the ground,
    An' 'e's kickin' all around:[9]
  For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar[10] clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
At the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen.[11]
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned[12] souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din.
    Yes, Din! Din! Din!
  You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
  Though I've belted[13] you and flayed you,
    By the livin' Gawd that made you,
  You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

RUDYARD KIPLING

TOMMY

I WENT into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no red-coats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:

[9] In great agony.
[10] A poor fellow to be pitied.
[11] No relief.
[12] Condemned and in great need of human service.
[13] Beaten you.

O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";
But it's "Thank you Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play—
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait outside";
But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide—
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"
But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll—
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;
While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, fall be'ind,"
But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind—
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
O it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all;
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face

The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees!

RUDYARD KIPLING

DANNY DEEVER

"WHAT are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square—they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files-on-Parade.
"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun," the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound—
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

" 'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade!
"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'—you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the Regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'hard for life," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quick-step play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

RUDYARD KIPLING

TOMLINSON

Now Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square,
And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him by the hair—
A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him far away,
Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the roar of the Milky Way:
Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down and drone and cease,
And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter holds the keys.
"Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die—
The good that ye did for the sake of men on little earth so lone!"
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.

"O I have a friend on earth," he said, "that was my priest and guide,
And well would he answer all for me if he were at my side."
"For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall be written fair,
But now ye wait at Heaven's Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak for you,
For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two."

Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little gain was there,
For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he saw that his soul was bare.
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his good in life.

"O this I have read in a book," he said, "and that was told to me,
And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovey."

The good soul flocked like homing doves and bade hime clear the path,
And Peter twirled the jangling Keys in weariness and wrath.
"Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought," he said, "and the tale is yet to run:
By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer—what ha' ye done?"

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and little good it bore,
For the darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade and Heaven's Gate before:—
"O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and this I have heard men say,
And this they wrote that another man wrote of a carl in Norroway."

"Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good lack! Ye have hampered Heaven's Gate;
There's little room between the stars in idleness to prate!
O none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest and kin
Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within;
Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for the doom has yet to run,
And . . . . the faith that ye share with Berkeley Square uphold you, Tomlinson!"

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by sun they fell
Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that rim the mouth of Hell.
The first are red with pride and wrath, the next are white with pain,
But the third are black with clinkered sins that cannot burn again:
They may hold their path, they may leave their path, with never a soul to mark,
They may burn or freeze, but they must not cease in the Scorn of the Outer Dark.
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it nipped him to the bone,
And he yearned to the flare of Hell-gate there as the light of his own hearth-stone.

The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the desperate legions drew,
But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would not let him through.
"Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must pay?" said he,
That ye rank yoursel' so fit for Hell and ask no leave of me?
I am all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that ye should give me scorn,
For I strove with God for your First Father the day that he was born.
Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer loud and high
The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or ever you came to die."

And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw against the night
The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-Mouth light;
And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw beneath his feet
The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in Hell-Mouth heat.
"O I had a love on earth," said he, "that kissed me to my fall;
And if ye would call my love to me I know she would answer all."

"All that ye did in love forbid it shall be written fair,
But now yet wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
Though we whistled your love from her bed to-night, I trow she would not run,
For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one by one!"

The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinton took up the tale and spoke of his sins in life:—
"Once I ha' laughed at the power of Love and twice at the grip of the Grave,
And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men might call me brave."

The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it aside to cool:—
"Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on the hide of a brain-sick fool?
I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the jolthead jest ye did
That I should waken my gentlemen that are sleeping three on a grid."

Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and there was little grace.
For Hell-Gate filled the houseless soul with the Fear of Naked Space.

"Nay, this I ha' heard," quo' Tomlinson, "and this was noised abroad,
And this I ha' got from a Belgian book on the word of a dead French lord."
"Ye ha' heard, ye ha' read, ye ha' got, good lack! and the tale begins afresh—
Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the sinful lust of the flesh?"

Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered, "Let me in—
For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife to sin the deadly sin."

The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and banked the fires high:
"Did ye read of that sin in a book?" said he, and Tomlinson said "Ay!"
The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little devils ran,
And he said: "Go husk this whimpering thief that comes in the guise of a man:
Winnow him out 'twixt star and star, and sieve his proper worth:
There's sore decline in Adam's line if this be spawn of earth."

Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked it all abroad.
As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven's foolish hoard
And back they came with the tattered Thing, as children after play,
And they said: "The soul that he got from God he has battered clean away.
We have threshed a stook of print and book, and winnowed a chattering wind,
And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find.
We have handled him, we have dandled him, we have seared him to the bone,
And Sire, if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of his own."

The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and rumbled deep and low:—
"I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should bid him go.
Let close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave him place,

My gentlemen that are so proud would flout me to my face;
They'd call my house a common stews and me a careless host,
And—I would not anger my gentlemen for the sake of a shiftless ghost."
The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that prayed to feel the flame,
And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought of his own good name:—
"Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit ye down to fry.
Did ye think of that theft for yourself?" said he; and Tomlinson said, "Ay!"

The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his heart was free from care:—
"Ye have scarce the soul of a louse," he said, "but the roots of sin are there.
And for that sin should ye come in were I the lord alone.
But sinful pride has rule inside—ay, mightier than my own
Ye are neither spirit nor spirk," he said; "ye are neither book nor brute—
Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake of Man's repute.
I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should mock your pain,
But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come back again.
Get hence, the hearse is at your door—the grim black stallions wait—
They bear your clay to place to-day. Speed, lest ye come too late!
Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed—go back with an open eye,
And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come to die:
That the sin they do by two and two they must pay for one by one,
And . . . . the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!"

RUDYARD KIPLING

RECESSIONAL

GOD of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
  The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
  On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
  Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord!

RUDYARD KIPLING

HIAWATHA'S WOOING

"As UNTO the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him, she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows,

Useless each without the other!"
Thus the youthful Hiawatha
Said within himself and pondered,
Much perplexed by various feelings,
Listless, longing, hoping, fearing,
Dreaming still of Minnehaha,
Of the lovely Laughing Water,
In the land of the Dacotahs.
"Wed a maiden of your people,"
Warning said the old Nokomis;
"Go not eastward, go not westward,
For a stranger, whom we know not!
Like a fire upon the hearth-stone
Is a neighbor's homely daughter,
Like the starlight or the moonlight
Is the handsomest of strangers!"
Thus dissuading spake Nokomis,
And my Hiawatha answered
Only this: "Dear old Nokomis,
Very pleasant is the firelight,
But I like the starlight better,
Better do I like the moonlight!"
Gravely then said old Nokomis:
"Bring not here an idle maiden,
Bring not here a useless woman,
Hands unskilful, feet unwilling;
Bring a wife with nimble fingers,
Heart and hand that move together,
Feet that run on willing errands!"
Smiling answered Hiawatha:
"In the land of the Dacotahs
Lives the Arrow-maker's daughter,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women.
I will bring her to your wigwam,
She shall run upon your errands,
Be your starlight, moonlight, firelight,

Be the sunlight of my people!"
Still dissuading said Nokomis:
"Bring not to my lodge a stranger
From the land of the Dacotahs!
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,
Often is there war between us,
There are feuds yet unforgotten,
Wounds that ache and still may open!"
Laughing answered Hiawatha:
"For that reason, if no other,
Would I wed the fair Dacotah,
That our tribes might be united,
That old feuds might be forgotten,
And old wounds be healed forever!"
Thus departed Hiawatha
To the land of the Dacotahs,
To the land of handsome women;
Striding over moor and meadow,
Through interminable forests,
Through uninterrupted silence.
And his heart outran his footsteps;
And he journeyed without resting,
Till he heard the cataract's laughter
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to him through the silence.
"Pleasant is the sound!" he murmured,
"Pleasant is the voice that calls me!"
On the outskirts of the forest,
'Twixt the shadow and the sunshine,
Herds of fallow deer were feeding,
But they saw not Hiawatha;
To his bow he whispered, "Fail not!"
To his arrow whispered, "Swerve not!"
Sent it singing on its errand,
To the red heart of the roebuck;
Threw the deer across his shoulder,
And sped forward without pausing.

At the doorway of his wigwam
Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs,
Making arrow-heads of jasper,
Arrow-heads of chalcedony.
At his side, in all her beauty,
Sat the lovely Minnehaha,
Sat his daughter, Laughing Water,
Plaiting mats of flags and rushes;
Of the past the old man's thoughts were,
And the maiden's of the future.

He was thinking, as he sat there,
Of the days when with such arrows
He had struck the deer and bison.
She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring-time,
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Would he come again for arrows
To the Falls of Minnehaha?
On the mat her hands lay idle,
And her eyes were very dreamy.

Through their thoughts they heard a footstep,
Heard a rustling in the branches,
And with glowing cheek and forehead,
With the deer upon his shoulders,
Suddenly from out the woodlands
Hiawatha, stood before them.

Straight the ancient Arrow-maker
Looked up gravely from his labor,
Laid aside the unfinished arrow,
Bade him enter at the doorway,
Saying, as he rose to meet him,
"Hiawatha, you are welcome!"

At the feet of Laughing Water
Hiawatha laid his burden,

And the maiden looked up at him,
Looked up from her mat of rushes,
Said with gentle look and accent,
"You are welcome, Hiawatha!"
Then uprose the Laughing Water,
Laid aside her mat unfinished,
Brought forth food and set before them,
Listened while the guest was speaking,
Listened while her father answered,
As in a dream she listened
To the words of Hiawatha,
As he talked of old Nokomis,
Who had nursed him in his childhood,
And of happiness and plenty
In the land of the Ojibways,
In the pleasant land and peaceful.
"After many years of warfare,
Many years of strife and bloodshed,
There is peace between the Ojibways
And the tribe of the Dacotahs."
Thus continued Hiawatha,
And then added, speaking slowly,
"That this peace may last forever,
And our hearts be more united,
Give me as my wife this maiden,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Loveliest of Dacotah women!"
And the ancient Arrow-maker
Paused a moment ere he answered,
Smoked a little while in silence,
Looked at Hiawatha proudly,
Fondly looked at Laughing Water,
And made answer very gravely:
"Yes, if Minnehaha wishes;
Let your heart speak, Minnehaha!"
And the lovely Laughing Water
Seemed more lovely, as she stood there,

Neither willing nor reluctant,
As she went to Hiawatha,
Softly took the seat beside him,
While she said, and blushed to say it,
"I will follow you, my husband!"
This was Hiawatha's wooing!
Thus it was he won the daughter
Of the ancient Arrow-maker,
In the land of the Dacotahs!
From the wigwam he departed,
Leading with him Laughing Water;
Hand in hand they went together,
Through the woodland and the meadow,
Left the old man standing lonely
At the doorway of his wigwam,
Heard the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to them from the distance,
"Fare thee well, O Minnehaha!"
Pleasant was the journey homeward,
Through interminable forests,
Over meadow, over mountain,
Over river, hill, and hollow.
Short it seemed to Hiawatha,
Though they journeyed very slowly,
Though his pace he checked and slackened
To the steps of Laughing Water.
Over wide and rushing rivers
In his arms he bore the maiden;
Cleared the tangled pathway for her,
Bent aside the swaying branches,
Made at night a lodge of branches,
And a bed with boughs of hemlock,
And a fire before the doorway
With the dry cones of the pine-tree.
All the traveling winds went with them,
O'er the meadow, through the forest;
All the stars of night looked at them,

Watched with sleepless eyes their slumber.
Pleasant was the journey homeward!
All the birds sang loud and sweetly
Songs of happiness and heart's-ease.
From the sky the sun benignant
Looked upon them through the branches,
Saying to them, "O my children,
Love is sunshine, hate is shadow,
Life is checkered shade and sunshine,
Rule by love, O Hiawatha!"
From the sky the moon looked at them,
Filled the lodge with mystic splendors,
Whispered to them, "O my children,
Day is restless, night is quiet,
Man imperious, woman feeble;
Rule by patience, Laughing Water!"
Thus it was they journeyed homeward;
Thus it was that Hiawatha
To the lodge of old Nokomis
Brought the moonlight, starlight, firelight,
Brought the sunshine of his people,
Minnehaha, Laughing Water,
Handsomest of all the women
In the land of the Dacotahs.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

THE GHOSTS

NEVER stoops the soaring vulture
On his quarry in the desert,
On the sick or wounded bison,
But another vulture, watching
From his high aërial look-out,
Sees the downward plunge, and follows;
And a third pursues the second,
Coming from the invisible ether,
First a speck, and then a vulture,

Till the air is dark with pinions.
So disasters come not singly;
But as if they watched and waited,
Scanning one another's motions,
When the first descends, the others
Follow, follow, gathering flock-wise
Round their victim, sick and wounded,
First a shadow, then a sorrow,
Till the air is dark with anguish.
Now o'er the dreary Northland,
Mighty Peboan, the Winter,
Breathing on the lakes and rivers,
Into stone had changed their waters.
From his hair he shook the snow-flakes,
Till the plains were strewn with whiteness.
Through the forest, wide and wailing,
Roamed the hunter on his snow-shoes;
In the village worked the women,
Pounded maize, or dressed the deer-skin.
One dark evening, after sundown,
In her wigwam Laughing Water
Sat with old Nokomis, waiting
For the steps of Hiawatha
Homeward from the hunt returning.
On their faces gleamed the fire-light,
Painting them with streaks of crimson;
And behind them crouched their shadows
In the corners of the wigwam,
And the smoke in wreaths above them
Climbed and crowded through the smoke-flue.
Then the curtain of the doorway
From without was slowly lifted;
Brighter glowed the fire a moment,
And a moment swerved the smoke-wreath,
As two women entered softly,
Passed the doorway uninvited,
Without word of salutation,

Without sign of recognition,
Sat down in the farthest corner,
Crouching low among the shadows.
Was it the wind above the smoke-flue
Muttering down into the wigwam?
Was it the owl, the Koko-koho,
Hooting from the dismal forest?
Sure a voice said in the silence:
"These are ghosts that come to haunt you,
From the kingdom of Ponemah,
From the land of the Hereafter!"
Homeward now came Hiawatha
From his hunting in the forest,
With the snow upon his tresses,
And the red deer on his shoulders.
At the feet of Laughing Water
Down he threw his lifeless burden;
Then he turned and saw the strangers,
Cowering, crouching with the shadows;
Said within himself, "Who are they?
What strange guests has Minnehaha?"
But he questioned not the strangers,
Only spake to bid them welcome
To his lodge, his food, his fireside.
When the evening meal was ready,
And the deer had been divided,
Both the pallid guests, the strangers,
Springing from among the shadows,
Seized upon the choicest portions,
Set apart for Laughing Water,
Without asking, without thanking,
Eagerly devoured the morsels,
Flitted back among the shadows
In the corner of the wigwam.
Not a word spake Hiawatha,
Not a motion made Nokomis,
Not a gesture Laughing Water;

Not a change came o'er their features;
Only Minnehaha softly
Whispered, saying, "They are famished;
Let them do what best delights them;
Let them eat, for they are famished,"
Many a daylight dawned and darkened,
Many a night shook off the daylight
As the pine shakes off the snow-flakes
Day by day the guests unmoving
Sat there silent in the wigwam;
And whenever Hiawatha
Came from fishing or from hunting,
When the evening meal was ready,
And the food had been divided,
Gliding from their darksome corner,
Came the pallid guests, the strangers,
Seized upon the choicest portions
Set aside for Laughing Water,
And without rebuke or question
Flitted back among the shadows.
Once at midnight Hiawatha,
Ever wakeful, ever watchful,
In the wigwam, dimly lighted
By the brands that still were burning,
By the glimmering, flickering firelight,
Heard a sighing, oft repeated,
Heard a sobbing, as of sorrow.
From his couch rose Hiawatha,
Saw the pallid guests, the shadows,
Sitting upright on their couches,
Weeping in the silent midnight.
And he said: "O guests! why is it
That your hearts are so afflicted,
That you sob so in the moonlight?"
Then the shadows ceased from weeping,
And they said, with gentle voices:
"We are ghosts of the departed,

Souls of those who once were with you.
Hither have we come to try you,
Do not lay such heavy burdens
In the graves of those you bury,
Not such weight of furs and wampum,
Not such weight of pots and kettles,
For the spirits faint beneath them,
Only give them food to carry,
Only give them fire to light them.
Four days is the spirit's journey
To the land of ghosts and shadows,
Four its lonely night encampments;
Therefore, when the dead are buried,
Let a fire, as night approaches,
Four times on the grave be kindled,
That the soul upon its journey
May not grope about in darkness.
Farewell, noble Hiawatha!
We have put you to the trial,
By the outrage of our actions.
We have found you great and noble,
Fail not in the greater trial,
Faint not in the harder struggle."
When they ceased, a sudden darkness
Fell and filled the silent wigwam.
Hiawatha heard a rustle
As of garments trailing by him,
Heard the curtain of the doorway
Lifted by a hand he saw not,
Felt the cold breath of the night air,
For a moment saw the starlight;
But he saw the ghosts no longer,
Saw no more the wandering spirits
From the kingdom of Ponemah,
From the land of the Hereafter.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

THE FAMINE

O THE long and dreary Winter!
O the cold and cruel Winter!
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow, and drifted
Through the forest, round the village.
Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage;
With his mittens and his snow-shoes
Vainly walked he through the forest,
Sought for bird or beast and found none,
Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
In the snow beheld no footprints,
In the ghastly, gleaming forest
Fell, and could not rise from weakness,
Perished there from cold and hunger.
O the famine and the fever!
O the wasting of the famine!
O the blasting of the fever!
O the wailing of the children!
O the anguish of the women!
All the earth was sick and famished;
Hungry was the air around them,
Hungry was the sky above them,
And the hungry stars in heaven
Like the eyes of wolves glared at them!
Into Hiawatha's wigwam
Came two other guests, as silent
As the ghosts were, and as gloomy,
Waited not to be invited,
Did not parley at the doorway,
Sat there without word of welcome
In the seat of Laughing Water.

And the foremost said: "Behold me!
I am Famine, Bukadawin!"
And the other said: "Behold me!
I am Fever, Ahkosewin!"
And the lovely Minnehaha
Shuddered as they looked upon her,
Shuddered at the words they uttered,
Lay down on her bed in silence,
Hid her face, but made no answer;
Lay there trembling, freezing, burning
At the looks they cast upon her,
At the fearful words they uttered.
Forth into the empty forest
Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
In his heart was deadly sorrow,
In his face a stony firmness;
On his brow the sweat of anguish
Started, but it froze and fell not.
Wrapped in furs and armed for hunting,
With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
With his quiver full of arrows,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Into the vast and vacant forest
On his snow-shoes strode he forward.
"Gitche Manito, the Mighty!"
Cried he with his face uplifted
In that bitter hour of anguish,
"Give your children food, O father!
Give us food or we must perish!
Give me food for Minnehaha,
For my dying Minnehaha!"
Through the far-resounding forest,
Through the forest vast and vacant,
Rang that cry of desolation,
But there came no other answer
Than the echo of his crying,
Than the echo of the woodlands,

"Minnehaha! Minnehaha!"
All day long roved Hiawatha
In that melancholy forest,
Through the shadow of whose thickets,
In the pleasant days of Summer,
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer,
He had brought his young wife homeward
From the land of the Dacotahs;
When the birds sang in the thickets,
And the streamlets laughed and glistened,
And the air was full of fragrance,
And the lovely Laughing Water
Said with voice that did not tremble,
"I will follow you, my husband!"
In the wigwam with Nokomis,
With those gloomy guests, that watched her,
With the Famine and the Fever,
She was lying, the Beloved,
She the dying Minnehaha.
"Hark!" she said; "I hear a rushing,
Hear a roaring and a rushing,
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to me from a distance!"
"No, my child!" said old Nokomis
" 'Tis the night-wind in the pine trees!"
"Look!" she said; "I see my father
Standing lonely in his doorway,
Beckoning to me from his wigwam
In the land of the Dacotahs!"
"No, my child!" said old Nokomis,
" 'Tis the smoke that waves and beckons!"
"Ah!" she said, "the eyes of Pauguk[1]
Glare upon me in the darkness,
I can feel his icy fingers
Clasping mine amid the darkness!
Hiawatha! Hiawatha!"

[1] Death.

And the desolate Hiawatha,
Far away amid the forest,
Miles away among the mountains,
Heard that sudden cry of anguish,
Heard the voice of Minnehaha,
Calling to him in the darkness,
"Hiawatha! Hiawatha!"

Over snow-fields waste and pathless,
Under snow-encumbered branches,
Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted;
Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing:
"Wahonowin! Wahonowin!
Would that I had perished for you,
Would that I were dead as you are!
Wahonowin! Wahonowin!"

And he rushed into the wigwam,
Saw the old Nokomis slowly
Rocking to and fro and moaning,
Saw his lovely Minnehaha
Lying dead and cold before him,
And his bursting heart within him
Uttered such a cry of anguish,
That the forest moaned and shuddered,
That the very stars in heaven
Shook and trembled with his anguish.

Then he sat down, still and speechless,
On the bed of Minnehaha,
At the feet of Laughing Water,
At those willing feet, that never
More would lightly run to meet him,
Never more would lightly follow.
With both hands his face he covered,
Seven long days and nights he sat there,
As if in a swoon he sat there,
Speechless, motionless, unconscious
Of the daylight or the darkness.

Then they buried Minnehaha.
In the snow a grave they made her,
In the forest deep and darksome,
Underneath the moaning hemlocks;
Clothed her in her richest garments,
Wrapped her in her robes of ermine,
Covered her with snow, like ermine;
Thus they buried Minnehaha.

And at night a fire was lighted,
On her grave four times was kindled,
For her soul upon its journey
To the Islands of the Blessed.
From his doorway Hiawatha
Saw it burning in the forest,
Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks;
From his sleepless bed uprising,
From the bed of Minnehaha,
Stood and watched it at the doorway,
That it might not be extinguished,
Might not leave her in the darkness.

"Farewell!" said he, "Minnehaha!
Farewell, O my Laughing Water!
All my heart is buried with you,
All my thoughts go onward with you!
Come not back again to labor,
Come not back again to suffer,
Where the Famine and the Fever
Wear the heart and waste the body.
Soon my task will be completed,
Soon your footsteps I shall follow
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the Kingdom of Ponemah,
To the Land of the Hereafter!"

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

EVE

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees;
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plumbs to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall . . . .
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eva!" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silvery
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite;
Eve, with her body white,
Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips;
Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low . . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain . . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill to-night—
"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.

RALPH HODGSON

O EARTH AND AUTUMN

(The closing lines from "Two Lives.")

(O EARTH-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
Lone on the loved hill. . . . . And below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shrivelled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . . forever . . . . forever . . . . forever . . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year,
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;
The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant wood ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
(. . . . far . . . .and far . . . . and far . . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)
And this the hill she visited, as friend;
And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
Down in the yellow valley is the end:
They laid her . . . . in no evening autumn tide . . . .

Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
The queens and cave-women of ancient earth.

This is the hill . . . . and over my city's towers
Across the world from sunest, yonder in air,
Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
To give, completed, to our children there . . . .
And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
Shall house new laughter. . . . . Yet I tried . . . .I tried . . . .
And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
I built her many a fire for love . . . . for mirth . . . .
(When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . . .
(. . . . farewell . . . . farewell . . . . farewell . . . .)
We dare not think too long on those who died,
While still so many yet must come to birth.

WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

THE EXPLORER

"THERE's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation,"
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so:
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

So I went, worn out of patience; never told my nearest neighbors—
Stole away with pack and ponies—left 'em drinking in the town;
And the faith that moveth mountains didn't seem to help my labours
As I faced the sheer main-ranges, whipping up and leading down.

March by march I puzzled through 'em, turning flanks and dodging shoulders.

Hurried on in hope of water, headed back for lack of grass;
Till I camped above the tree-line—drifted snow and naked boulders—
Felt free air astir to windward—knew I'd stumbled on the Pass.

'Thought to name it for the finder: but that night the Norther found me—
Froze and killed the plains-bred ponies; so I called the camp Despair
(It's the Railway Gap to-day though). Then my Whisper waked to hound me:—
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Over younder! Go you there!"

Then I knew, the while I doubted—knew His Hand was certain o'er me.
Still—it might be self-delusion—scores of better men had died—
I could reach the township living, but . . . . He knows what terror tore me. . . . .
But I didn't . . . . but I didn't. I went down the other side,

Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned to aloes,
And the aloes sprung to thickets and a brimming stream ran by;
But the thickets dwined to thorn-scrub, and the water drained to shallows,
And I dropped again on desert—blasted earth, and blasting sky. . . . .

I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by 'em;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices, through the smoke;
I remember they were fancy—for I threw a stone to try 'em.
"Something lost behind the Ranges" was the only word they spoke.

I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
'Very full of dreams that desert, but my two legs took me through it . . . .
And I used to watch 'em moving with the toes all black and raw.

But at last the country altered—White Man's country past disputing—
Rolling grass and open timber, with a hint of hills behind—

There I found me food and water, and I lay a week recruiting.
Got my strength and lost my nightmares. Then I entered on my find.

Thence I ran my first rough survey—chose my trees and blazed and ringed 'em—
Week by week I pried and sampled—week by week my findings grew.
Saul he went to look for donkeys, and by God[1] he found a kingdom!
But by God, who sent His Whisper, I had struck the worth of two!

Up along the hostile mountains, where the hair-poised snowslide shivers—
Down and through the big fat marshes that the virgin ore-bed stains,
Till I heard the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined rivers,
And beyond the nameless timber saw illimitable plains!

'Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades between 'em;
Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand head an hour;
Counted leagues of water-frontage through the axe-ripe woods that screened 'em—
Saw the plant to feed a people—up and waiting for the power!

Well I know who'll take the credit—all the clever chaps that followed—
Came, a dozen men together—never knew my desert-fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
They'll go back and do the talking. They'll be called the Pioneers!

They will find my sites of townships—not the cities that I set there.
They will rediscover rivers—not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright.

Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
Have I kept one single nugget—(barring samples)? No, not I!

[1] By the gift of God.

Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker,
But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

Ores you'll find there; wood and cattle; water-transit sure and steady
(That should keep the railway rates down), coal and iron at your doors.
God took care to hide that country till He judged His people ready,
Then He chose me for[2] His Whisper, and I've found it, and it's yours!

Yes, your "Never-never country"—yes, your "edge of cultivation"
And "no sense in going further"—till I crossed the range to see.
God forgive me! No, I didn't. It's God's present to our nation.
Anybody might have found it but—His Whisper came to Me!

RUDYARD KIPLING

MULHOLLAND'S CONTRACT

The fear was on the cattle, for the gale was on the sea,
An' the pens broke up on the lower deck an' let the creatures free—
An' the lights went out on the lower deck, an' no one near but me.

I had been singin' to them to keep 'em quiet there,
For the lower deck is the dangerousest, requirin' constant care,
An' give to me as the strongest man, though used to drink and swear.

I seed my chance was certain of bein' horned or trod,
For the lower deck was packed with steers thicker'n peas in a pod,
An' more pens broke at every roll—so I made a Contract with God.

An' by the terms of the Contract, as I have read the same,
If He got me to port alive I would exalt His Name,
An' praise His Holy Majesty till further orders came.

He saved me from the cattle an' He saved me from the sea,
For they found me 'tween two drownded ones where the roll had landed me—
An' a four-inch crack on top of my head, as crazy as could be.

[2] To receive.

But that were done by a stanchion, an' not by a bullock at all,[1]
An' I lay still for seven weeks convalescing of the fall,
An' readin' the shiny Scripture texts in the Seaman's Hospital.

An' I spoke to God of our Contract, an' He says to my prayer:
"I never puts on My ministers no more than they can bear.
So back you go to the cattle-boats an' preach My Gospel there.

For human life is chancy at any kind of trade,
But most of all, as well you know, when the steers are mad-afraid;
So you go back to the cattle-boats an' preach 'em as I've said.

They must quit drinkin' an' swearin', they mustn't knife on a blow,
They must quit gamblin' their wages, and you must preach it so;
For now those boats are more like Hell than anything else I know."

I didn't want to do it, for I knew what I should get,
An' I wanted to preach Religion, handsome an' out of the wet,
But the Word of the Lord was laid on me, an' I done what I was set.

I have been smit an' bruised, as warned would be the case,
An' turned my cheek to the smiter exactly as Scripture says;
But, following that, I knocked him down an' led him up to Grace.

An' we have preaching on Sundays whenever the sea is calm,
An' I use no knife or pistol an' I never take no harm,
For the Lord abideth back of me to guide my fighting arm.

An' I sign for four-pound-ten a month and save the money clear,
An' I am in charge of the lower deck, an' I never lose a steer;
An' I believe in Almighty God an' I preach His Gospel here.

The skippers say I'm crazy, but I can prove 'em wrong,
For I am in charge of the lower deck with all that doth belong—
Which they would not give to a lunatic, and the competition so strong!

RUDYARD KIPLING

[1] It would be a disgrace to be knocked-out by a bullock.

DE GLORY ROAD

O DE Glory Road! O de Glory Road!
I'm gwine ter drap mah load upon de Glory Road.

I lay on mah bed untell one erclock,
An' de Lawd come callin' all His faithful flock.
An' He call "Whoo-ee!", an' He call "Whoo-ee!"
An' I knowed dat de Sabior was ercallin' me.
An' He call "Whoo-ee!", an' He call "Whoo-ee!"
An' I cry, "Massa Jesus, is you callin' me?"
An' He call "Whoo-ee!", an' He call "Whoo-ee!"
An' I riz up f'um mah pallet, an' I cry, "Hyahs me!"

De Lawd sez, "Niggah, ain't I call yer thrice
Ter ride erlong behin'd me up ter Paradise,
On de Glory Road, on de Glory Road?"
An' I clime up ter de saddle, an' I jined de load!

De hawse he wuz longer dan a thousan' mile';
His tail went lashin', an' his hoofs wuz wil';
His mane wuz flamin', an' his eyes wuz moons,
An' his mouth kep' singin' Halleluyah tunes!

De Lawd sez, "Niggah, why 'n' cher look erroun'?"
An' dar we wus flyin' over risin' groun'.
Powerful hills, an' mountains too,
An' de earth an' de people wuz drapt f'um view.
An' I hyahd all 'roun' me how de sperits sang,
An' de Lawd sang louder dan de whole shebang!

De Lawd sez, "Niggah, why 'n' cher look ergin?"
An' dar wuz de Debbil, on de back ov Sin,
A-bangin' on de critter wid his whip an' goad,
An' boun' he gwine ter kotch us, on de Glory Road!
"O Lawdy, it's de Debbil, comin' straight f'um Hell!
I kin tell him by his roarin', an' de brimstone smell!"
But de Lawd sez, "Niggah, he ain' kotch us yit!"

An' He lashed an' He hustled, an' He loosed de bit.
Den de Debbil crep' closuh, an' I hyahd him yell,
"I'm gwine ter kotch a niggah, fur ter roas' in Hell!"
An' I cried, "Lawd, sabe me!" An' de Lawd cry, "Sho!"
An' hyah it was Hebben, an we shet de do'.

O Glory, Glory, how de angels sang!
O Glory, Glory, how de rafters rang!
An' Moses 'n' Aaron an' Methusalum,
Dey shout an' dey holler, an' dey beat de drum.
King Solomon kissed me, an' his thousan' wives,
Jes' like dey'd knowed me, durin' all dey lives!
An' de Lawd says, "Niggah, take a gran'-stan' seat.
But I 'specks youse hongry; have a bite ter eat?"
An' de ravens fed me, an' Elijah prayed,
An' de Sabed Ones gathered, while de organ played,
An' dey cry, "O sinnah, come an' lose yuh load
On de Glory Road, on de Glory Road.
An' come an' dwell in de Lawd's abode,
Glory, Glory, on de Glory Road!"

Sez de Lawd, "No, sinnah, you mus' trabble back
Ter hep po' niggahs up de Glory Track;
Ter he'p old mo'ners, an' de scoffin' coons,
By shoutin' loud Halleluyah tunes."

O come, mah breddern, won' you drap yuh load,
An' ride ter Hebben up de Glory Road?

CLEMENT WOOD

BIBLICAL CONDENSATIONS

Condensed and arranged

by

R. D. T. Hollister

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SPRING LOVE SONG

O kiss me, my love, with the kisses of thy mouth;
For thy love is better than wine.
Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant;
Thou art fair, my love, thou art fair.

Thine eyes are as doves;
Thy lips are a thread of scarlet.
Thou art as a lily among thorns,
As an apple tree among the trees of the wood.
Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is fair.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields;
Let us lodge in the villages.
Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has budded,
And the pomegranates be in flower:
Then will I give thee my love.
The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
And at our door are precious fruits,
Many precious fruits, new and old,
Which I have laid up for thee.

Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing birds is come,
And the voice of the dove is heard in the land.
The fig ripeneth her green fig,
And the vines are in blossom;
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Awake, O north wind, and come O south,
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow.

From *The Song Of Songs*

BABYLON

BABYLON,
The glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldean's pride,

Shall be as when God overthrew
Sodom and Gomorrah.

It shall never be inhabited,
Neither shall it be dwelt in
From generation to generation.

Neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there,
Nor the shepherds make their flocks to lie down there;
But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,
And ostriches shall dwell there,
And satyrs shall dance there,
Wolves shall cry in the castles,
And jackals in the pleasant palaces.

Babylon
Is fallen, is fallen;
And all the graven images of her gods
Are broken into the ground.

—*Isaiah*

WILD GRAPE VINEYARD

My beloved had a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill:
And he digged it, and gathered out the stones,
And he planted it with choicest vines,
And he also hewed a winepress out therein,
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes;
And it brought forth
Wild grapes.

Now I will tell you what I will do
To my vineyard:
I will take away the hedge thereof,
And it shall be eaten up;
I will break down the wall thereof,
And it shall be trodden under foot;

I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned nor hoed;
But there shall come up
Briers and thorns.

—*Isaiah*

EXHORTATION

WASH you,
Make you clean;
Put away the evil of your doings,
Cease to do evil,
Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Relieve the oppressed,
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together.
Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they be red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.

—*Isaiah*

WOE UNTO THEM

WOE unto them that join house to house,
That lay field to field,
Till there be no room,
And ye are made to dwell alone
In the midst of the land!
For many houses shall be desolate,
Even great and fair, without inhabitant.

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,
That they may follow strong drink;
That tarry late into the night,
Till wine inflame them!

And the harp, and the lute,
And the tabret, and the pipe,
And wine are in their feasts.
For hell has enlarged her desire,
And opened her mouth without measure;
And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp
Shall descend into it.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!
As the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
And as the dry grass sinketh down into the flame,
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall go up as dust.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
And to the writers that write perverseness;
To turn aside the needy from justice,
And to rob the poor of their right,
To make widows their spoil,
And the fatherless their pray!
For they shall bow down under the prisoners,
And shall fall under the slain.

—*Isaiah*

O SLUGGARD

I WENT by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of a man void of understanding;
And lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I beheld, and considered well:
I saw and received instruction.
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,

A little folding of the hands in sleep;
So shall thy poverty come as a robber;
And thy want as an armed man.

Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep;
And the idle soul shall suffer hunger.
As the door turneth upon its hinges,
So doth the sluggard turn upon his bed.
The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish,
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.
He will not plow by reason of the weather;
Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
Which having no chief, overseer, or ruler,
Provideth her bread in the summer,
And gathereth her food in the harvest.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.

From *Proverbs*

GOODNESS OF WISDOM

HAPPY is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.

The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies:
None of the things thou canst desire are to be compared with her.

Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her:
And happy is every one that retaineth her.
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
So shall they be life unto thy soul.

Wisdom is the principal thing:
With all thy getting get understanding.
Exalt her, and she shall bring thee to honor;
She shall give thy head a garland of grace.

From *Proverbs*

EVIL OF WINE

Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler;
And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise.

Be not among winebibbers;
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty,
And drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

Who hath woe? who hath sorrow?
Who hath contentions? Who hath complainings?
Who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
They that tarry long at the wine;
They that go to seek out mixed wine.

Look not upon the wine when it is red,
When it giveth its color to the cup,
When it goeth down smoothly:
At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.

From *Proverbs*

A WORTHY WOMAN

A WORTHY woman who can find?
For her value is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband trusteth her,
And she does him good all the days of her life.
She riseth while it is yet night,
And giveth food to her household,
And their tasks to her maidens.
She seeketh wool and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands.
She layeth her hands to the distaff,
And her hands hold the spindle.
She maketh herself carpets of tapestry;
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.
She is not afraid of the snow for her household;
For her household are clothed in scarlet.
She maketh linen garments and selleth them;
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.
Strength and dignity are her raiment;
And she laugheth at the time to come.
She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the law of kindness is on her tongue.
She spreadeth out her hands to the poor;
Yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
Her children rise up, and call her blessed;
Her husband praises her, saying:
"Many daughters have done worthily,
But thou excellest them all."
Give her of the works of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the courts of wisdom.

From *Proverbs*

LOVE

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And

though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long, and is kind;
Love envieth not;
Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
Doth not behave itself unseemly,
Seeketh not her own,
Is not easily provoked,
Thinketh no evil;
Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
Beareth all things, believeth all things,
Hopeth all things, endureth all things.
Love never faileth:
But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;
Whether there be tongues, they shall cease;
Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

—Paul to the Corinthians

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Whatsoever things are true,
Whatsoever things are honest,
Whatsoever things are just,
Whatsoever things are pure,
Whatsoever things are lovely,
Whatsoever things are of good report;
If there be any virtue, if there be any praise,
Think on these things.

—Paul to the Philippians

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

THE fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

—*Paul to the Galatians*

THE TONGUE

THE tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much a little fire kindleth! The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity among our members. It defileth the whole body, setteth on fire our nature, and is set on fire by hell. Every kind of beasts and birds, and creeping things, and things of the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by man: but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. Therewith we bless God and curse men. Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing.

—*James*

THE BLESSED

BLESSED are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven;
Blessed are they that mourn,
For they shall be comforted;
Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth;
Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,
For they shall be filled;
Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy;
Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God;
Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called the sons of God.

—*Jesus*

TREASURES

LAY not up for yourself treasures upon earth,
Where moth and rust doth corrupt,

And where thieves break through and steal;
But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven,
Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,
And where thieves do not break through nor steal:
For where your treasure is
There will your heart be also.

—*Jesus*

BE NOT ANXIOUS

Be not anxious for your life,
What ye shall eat,
Or what ye shall drink;
Nor yet for your body,
What ye shall put on.
Is not the life more than food,
And the body than raiment?
Which of you being anxious
Can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?

Consider the lilies of the field,
How they grow;
They toil not, neither do they spin:
And yet I say unto you,
That even Solomon in all his glory
Was not arrayed like one of these.

If God so clothe the grass of the field,
Which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven,
Shall he not much more clothe you,
O ye of little faith?

Be not therefore anxious, saying,
"What shall we eat?
What shall we drink?
Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"
But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And his righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you.

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow:
For the morrow will be anxious for itself.
Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

—*Jesus*

JUDGE NOT

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged,
For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged;
And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,
But considereth not the beam that is in thine own eye?
How wilt thou say to thy brother,
"Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye;"
And lo, the beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite!
Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye,
And then thou shalt see clearly
To cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

—*Jesus*

MY NEIGHBOR

A CERTAIN man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, "Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more I, when I come back again, will repay thee."

Which of these three, thinketh thou, was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?

—*Jesus*

UNTO HIM THAT HATH

A MAN traveling into a far country, called his servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them five other talents. And likewise he that had received two, gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid his lord's money.

Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, "Lord, thou deliverst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained five other talents." His lord said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

And he also that received the two talents came and said, "Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents: lo, I have gained two other talents." His lord said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

And he also that had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own."

But the lord answered and said unto him, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou ought therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath

not shall be taken away even that which he hath. Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be weaping and gnashing of teeth."

—*Jesus*

INASMUCH AS YE DID IT

THE King shall say, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

Then the King shall answer and say unto them, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethern, even these least, ye did it unto me."

—*Jesus*

TAKE HEED OF COVETOUSNESS

TAKE heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plenteously: and he reasoned within himself, saying, "What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" And he said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.' " But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and the things thou hast provided for thyself, whose shall they be?"

—*Jesus*

VANITY OF VANITIES

An Ancient Discussion of The Evanescence of Life

WHAT profit hath a man of all his labor

Wherein he laboreth under the sun?
One generation goeth, and another generation cometh;
And the earth abideth forever.
The sun riseth, and goeth down;
The wind turneth towards the south or towards the north;
The rivers run into the sea;
That which hath been is that which shall be;
And there is no new thing under the sun.
Behold, all is vanity and striving after wind:
For in much wisdom is much grief;
And he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

I said to my heart, go to now,
I will cheer thee with mirth;
Therefore enjoy pleasure.
I made me great works;
I planted me vineyards;
I made me gardens and parks,
And planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit;
I made pools of water;
I bought men servants and maidens;
I had great possessions of herds and flocks;
I gathered me also gold and silver,
And the peculiar treasure of kings;
I got me men singers and women singers,
And musical instruments of all sorts;
Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them.
Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought,
And behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind.

I turned myself to behold wisdom;
And I saw that wisdom excelleth folly,
As far as light excelleth darkness.
The wise man's eyes are in his head;
The fool walketh in darkness:
Yet one event happeneth to them all;
The wise man dies even as the fool;

In days to come all will have been forgotten.
So I hated life, and I hated all my labor:
Seeing I must leave it unto the man that shall come after me.

Then I saw that there is nothing better for a man
Than to eat and drink and make his soul enjoy good in his labor:
For there is a season to everything under the heaven:
There is a time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to speak, and a time to keep silent.
God hath made everything beautiful in its time.
There is nothing better for man than to rejoice,
And to do good, and enjoy good in all his labor.
Whatever thy hand findeth to do,
Do it with all thy might.
The race is not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong.

Wisdom is better than strength;
Wisdom is better than weapons of war.
The words of the wise spoken in quiet
Are heard more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.
A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine,
And the hardness of his face is changed.
A wise man's heart is at his right hand,
And the words of his mouth are gracious.

Cast thy bread upon the waters,
For thou shalt find it after many days.
Give a portion to seven, yea, even to eight;
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

He that observeth the wind shall not sow;
And he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.
In the morning sow thy seed,
And in the evening withhold not thine hand.

Truly the light is sweet,
And a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.
If a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all;
But let him remember the days of darkness,
For all that cometh is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth;
And let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,
And walk in the ways of thy heart,
And in the sight of thine eyes:
But know thou, that for all these things
God will bring thee into judgment.
Therefore remove sorrow from thine heart,
And put away evil from thy flesh:
For youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

Remember also thy creator in the days of thy youth,
While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, "I have no pleasure in them:"
While the sun is not darkened,
Nor the light, nor the moon, nor the stars,
And the clouds return not after the rain:
When the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,
And the grinders cease because they are few,
And the windows be darkened and the doors be shut:
When the sound of the grinding is low,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low,
And the almond tree shall blossom,
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,
And desire shall fail:
Because man goeth to his long home,
And the mourners go about the streets:

While the silver cord is not loosed,
Nor the golden bowl broken at the fountain,
Nor the wheel broken at the cistern;

And the dust return to earth as it was,
And the spirit return unto God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!
God shall bring every work into judgment,
And every hidden thing;
Whether it be good or evil.

—*Ecclesiastes*

JOB

An Ancient Search for the Mystery of Suffering

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, who name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance was seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the very greatest of all the children of the East.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before him, and the Trier-of-men came also among them. And God said unto the Trier, "Whence comest thou?"

Then the Trier answered God, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

And God said unto the Trier, "Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil."

Then the Trier answered God, and said, "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance has increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face."

And God said, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

So the Trier-of-men went forth from the presence of God. And it fell on a day when Job's sons and his daughters were drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, that there came a messenger to Job, and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans came and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

And while this servant was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

And while he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, "The Chaldeans made three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have taken them away; yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

And while this servant was yet speaking, there came still another and said, "Thy sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped; and he said,

> "Naked came I out of my mother's womb,
> And naked shall I return thither:
> God gave and God has taken away:
> Blessed be the name of God."

Again there came a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before God, and the Trier-of-men came also among them. And God said to him, "From whence cometh thou?"

And the Trier answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

And God said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one who feareth God, and turneth away from evil. He still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou would have me destroy him without cause."

And the Trier answered God, and said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face."

Then God replied, "Behold, he is in thine hand; only spare his life."

So the Trier-of-men went forth from the presence of God, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And Job took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die."

But Job said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; and they made an appointment to come and to comfort Job. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads. So they sat down with Job among the ashes seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was great. After this Job open his mouth, and cursed his day.

Job Regrets His Birth

Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said, "There is a man child conceived!"
Let that day be darkness;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it!
Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own;
Let a cloud dwell upon it;
Let all that maketh black the day terrify it!

Let that night be barren;
Let no joyful noise come therein;
Let them curse it that curse the day!
Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark;
Let it look for the light, but have none;
Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning:
Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb,
Nor hid trouble from mine eyes!

Why died I not from the womb?
Why did the knees receive me?
Or the breasts, that I should suck?
For now should I have lain down and been quiet;
I should have slept;
Then had I been at rest,
With kings and counsellors of the earth,
Who built desolate tombs for themselves;
Or with princes who had gold,
And filled their houses with silver;
Or as a hidden untimely birth
I had not been;
As infants which never saw the light.

There the wicked cease from troubling;
There the weary be at rest.
There the prisoners are at ease together;
They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.
The small and the great are there;
There the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul;
Who long for death, but it cometh not,
And dig for it more than for hid treasures;
Who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad,
When they can find the grave?
Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,

And whom God hath hedged in?
For my sighing cometh before I eat,
And my groanings are poured out like the waters.
For the thing which I fear cometh upon me,
And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.
I am not at ease, neither am I quiet,
Neither have I rest;
But trouble cometh.

Eliphaz Answers Job

REMEMBER, I pray thee, whoever perished, being innocent?
Or where were the upright cut off?
According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow trouble, reap the same.
Affliction cometh not forth from the dust,
Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.
Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.
For He maketh sore, and bindeth up;
He woundeth, and His hands make whole.
He shall deliver thee in six troubles;
Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.
In famine He shall redeem thee from death;
And in war from the power of the sword.
Thy seed shall be great,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
Like as a shock of corn cometh in in its season.

Lo this, we have searched it, so it is;
Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

Job Replies to Eliphaz

OH that my grief were but weighed,
And my calamity laid in the balances together!
For they would be heavier than the sands of the sea.

To him that is ready to faint
  Kindness should be showed from his friend;
But you have dealt with me deceitfully as a brook,
  As the channel of brooks that pass away.
Teach me and I will hold my peace;
Cause me to understand wherein I have erred:
  For how forcible are right words;
  But what does your arguing reprove?
  Do you think to reprove the words of one who is desperate;
  Whose speeches are like the wind?

Wearisome nights are appointed to me.
When I lie down I say,
"When shall I arise, and the night be gone?"
I am full of tossing to and fro unto the dawning of the day.
My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust;
My skin closeth up and breaketh out afresh.
My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.

Oh remember that my life is wind:
Mine eyes shall see good no more.
Therefore I will not refrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

  I loath my life;
  I would not live alway;
  Let me alone, O God,
  For my days are vanity.
If I have sinned, what can I do unto Thee,
  O thou watcher of men?
Why hast Thou set me as a mark for Thee,
  So that I am a burden to myself?
Why doth Thou not pardon my transgression,
  And take away mine iniquity?
For now shall I lie down in the dust;
And Thou shalt seek me diligently, but I shall not be.

Bildad Advises Job

How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a mighty wind?
If thou wouldst seek diligently unto God,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty,
If thou wert pure and upright,
Surely now He would awake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosper.
God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will He uphold the evil-doers.
He will fill thy mouth with laughter,
And thy lips with shouting.
They that hate thee will be clothed with shame,
And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.

Job Answers Bildad

How can a man be perfect in the sight of God?
If I had called and God had answered me;
Yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice.
For He breaketh me with a tempest,
And multiplieth my wounds without cause;
He filleth me with bitterness.
Though I be righteous, my own mouth shall condemn me;
Though I be perfect, it shall prove me perverse.
I say, God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.
If it be not He, who then is it?

If I say, "I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad countenance, and be of good cheer:"
I know that God will not hold me innocent.
If I wash myself with snow water,
And make my hands never so clean:
Yet will He plunge me into the ditch.
For He is not a man as I am, that I should answer Him,
That we should come together in judgment;
There is no daysman between us,
That might lay his hand upon us both.

Let Him take His rod away from me,
That I may speak and not fear Him.

My soul is weary of my life;
I will give free course to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Is it good unto Thee, O God, that Thou shouldst oppress,
That Thou shouldest despise the work of Thine hands?
Thine hands have framed me and fashioned me together round about;
Yet Thou doth destroy me.
Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou has fashioned me as clay;
And wilt Thou bring me into dust again?
Wherefore then hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb?

Are not my days few?
Cease then that I may take comfort a little
Before I go whence I shall not return:
Even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death:
A land of thick darkness;
A land of the shadow of death,
Without order, where light is as darkness.

Zophar Admonishes Job

Oh that God would speak, and open His lips against thee,
And that He would show thee the secrets of wisdom.
God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.
Yet if thou set thine heart aright,
And put thine iniquity far away;
Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot.
Thou shalt forget thy misery;
Thou shalt remember it as waters that have passed away.
Thy life shall be clearer than the noonday;
Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning;
Thou shalt be secure, because there is hope.

Job Replies to Zophar

No doubt ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
  But I have understanding as well as you;
  I am not inferior to you:
  Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

With God is strength and sound wisdom;
The deceived and the deceiver are His.
He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,
And maketh the judges fools.
He leadeth priests away spoiled,
And overthroweth the mighty.
He increaseth the nations,
And destroyeth them.
  Lo, mine eye hath seen all this,
  Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
  What ye know, the same do I know also:
  I am not inferior to you.
  I desire to reason with God,
  But ye are forgers of lies,
  Ye are physicians of no value.
  Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace,
  And it should be your wisdom.
  Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes,
  Your defenses are defenses of clay.
  Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak to God.

O God, why wilt Thou harass a driven leaf?
  Why wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?

Man that is born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble;
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down,
He fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.
There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,
That it will sprout again;

But man dieth and wasteth away:
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the river decayeth and drieth up,
So man lieth down and riseth not;
Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of their sleep.

Eliphaz Argues With Job

THINE own mouth condemneth thee, and not I;
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

What is man that he should be clean?
And he that is born of woman that he should be righteous?
God putteth no trust in His holy ones;
Yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight:
How much less one that is abominable and corrupt,
A man that drinketh iniquity like water!

I will show thee, hear thou me;
And that which I have seen I will declare.
The wicked man travaileth in pain all his days;
The sound of terrors is in his ears;
Distress and anguish make him afraid:
Because he hath stretched out his hand against God,
And behaved himself proudly against the Almighty.

Job is Uncomforted

I HAVE heard many such things:
Miserable comforters are ye all.
I also could speak as ye do,
If your soul were in my soul's stead;
I could join words together against you,
And shake mine head at you.
But I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the solace of my lips would assuage your grief.

Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged:
And though I forbear, what am I eased?
God hath torn me in His wrath, and persecuted me;
He hath gnashed upon me with His teeth.
I was at ease, and He brake me asunder;
Yea, He hath taken me by the neck and dashed me to pieces.
My face is foul with weeping,
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death.
Oh that one might plead for a man with God,
As a son of man pleadeth for his neighbor!
But behold, I cry out of wrong, and am heard not;
I cry for help, but there is no judgment.
Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends,
For the hand of God hath touched me!
Why do ye persecute me as God,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?
Oh that my words were written!
That they were graven in the rock forever!
For I know that my defender liveth,
And that He shall stand up at last upon the earth;
And after my skin has been destroyed,
Yet without my flesh shall I see God;
Whom I shall see on my side.

Eliphaz Accuses Job

Is not thy wickedness great?
Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for naught,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
Thou hast given no water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
Therefore snares are round thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee.
Wilt thou keep the old way which wicked men have trodden?
Acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace.

Job Defends Himself

God knows the way I take;
When He has tried me, I shall come forth gold.
My foot hath held fast to His steps;
His way have I kept, and turned not aside;
I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips.
As God liveth, who has taken away my right,
My lips shall not speak unrighteousness;
Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me;
My heart shall not reproach me, as long as I live.

If I have walked with vanity,
And my foot hath hasted to deceit;
If my heart hath walked after mine eyes,
And if any spot hath cleaved to mine hands:
  Then let me sow, and let another eat.
If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or my maidservant;
If I have withheld the poor from their desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
If I have eaten my morsel alone,
And the fatherless have not eaten thereof;
If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or any poor suffer without covering:
  Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade,
  And my arm be broken from the bone.
If I have made gold my hope,
Or have said to fine gold, thou art my confidence;
If I have rejoiced in the destruction of him that hated me,
Or lifted up myself when evil found him;
If the men of my tent have not said,
"Who can find one that has not eaten his meat?"
If I have covered my transgressions,
Because I feared the great multitude;
If my land crieth out against me,
And I have eaten the fruits thereof without money:
  Then let thistles grow instead of wheat,
  And cockle instead of barley.

The words of Job are ended.

Then Elihu, a Young Spectator, Voices His Wisdom

JOB's three friends ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was the wrath of Elihu kindled against Job, because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Then Elihu spoke.

I am young, and you are old:
Wherefore I held back,
I said age should speak,
For the multitude of years should teach wisdom.
But it is not the great that are wise,
Nor the aged that understand judgment;
I also will show my opinion,
For I am full of words.
I will speak that I may find relief;
I will open by lips and answer.
Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me:
Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.

God is greater than man:
Why dost thou strive against Him?
He breaketh in pieces mighty men in ways past finding out;
He giveth not account of any of His matters.
Man is chastened with pain upon his bed,
And with continual strife in his bones.
His flesh is consumed away,
And his soul draweth near unto the pit.
Lo, these things doth God work,
To bring back man's soul from the pit;
That he may be enlightened with the light of the living.

Suffer me a little and I will show thee,
For I have yet somewhat to say on God's behalf.
I will fetch my knowledge from afar,

And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
For truly my words are not false:
One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any.
If men are bound in fetters,
And be taken in the cords of affliction;
Then He showeth them their work and their transgressions;
He openeth their ears to instruction,
And commandeth that they return from iniquity.
If they hearken and serve Him,
They shall spend their days in prosperity,
And their years in pleasantness.
But if they hearken not,
They shall perish by the sword,
And they shall die without knowledge.

Behold, God is great, and we know him not;
The number of His years is unsearchable.
He draweth up the drops of water,
Which distil in rain from His vapour:
Which the skies pour down, and drop upon man abundantly.
He spreadeth His light around Him;
And judgeth the people.
He covereth His hands with the lightning;
And giveth it a charge that it strike the mark.
After it a voice roareth;
He thundereth with the voice of His majesty.
Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still;
And consider the wondrous works of God.
Dost thou know how God causeth the lightning of His clouds to shine?
Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?
Canst thou with Him spread out the sky,
Which is strong as a molten mirror?
Out of the north cometh golden splendor.
God hath upon Him terrible majesty.

Then God Speaks out of the Whirlwind

WHO is this that darkeneth counsel
By words without knowledge?
Gird up now thy loins like a man,
For I will question thee.
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare if thou hast understanding.
Who determined the measure thereof,
If thou knowest?
Or who stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the cornerstone thereof,
When all the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began,
And caused the dayspring to know its place?
Hast thou entered the treasuries of the snow,
Or hast thou seen the treasuries of the hail?
Who hath cleft a channel for the waterflood,
Or a way for the lightning of the thunder;
To cause it to rain on a land where no man is;
On a wilderness, wherein there is no man;
And to cause the tender grass to spring forth?
Hath the rain a father?
Who hath begotten the drops of dew?
Out of whose womb came the ice?
Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?

Who can number the clouds by wisdom,
Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven?
Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness?
Who provideth for the raven his food?
Hast thou given the horse his might?
Doth the hawk soar by thy wisdom?
Doth the eagle mount up at thy command?

Gird up thy loins now like a man,
For I will demand answer of thee.
Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be justified?
Shall he that finds fault with God contend with the Almighty?
He that argueth with God, let him answer this.

Job Repents

Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer Thee?
I have uttered that which I understood not:
Therefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes.

Good Comes as Well as Evil

And God accepted Job, and gave him twice as much as he had before. So God blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning. And Job had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters; and in all the land there were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job.

And Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his son's sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of years.

TENNYSON

LYRICS AND SHORT POEMS

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BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE LITTLE GRAVE

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

MOTHER'S SONG

Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!
Beat upon mine! you are mine, my sweet!
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your feet,
My sweet.

Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss!
For I give you this, and I give you this!
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a kiss!
Sleep!

Father and Mother will watch you grow,
And gather the roses whenever they blow,
And find the white heather[1] wherever you go,
My sweet.

ASK ME NO MORE[2]

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

[1] This suggests that parental love seeks both the rich and the delicately beautiful experiences of life for the child.

[2] The speaker in this is a young woman who is trying for the last time to resist the pleadings of her lover; but she tries in vain. At the end complete submission makes her yield to the lightest touch of love.

TEARS, IDLE TEARS[1]

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;[2]
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;[3]
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

[1] Mingled happiness and tears come with the ripening fields of autumn. This divine despair, that is common to all sensitive souls, grows deeper as life itself ripens towards its autumn.

[2] It is always sad to see a ship bearing all we love sink below the verge of the horizon.

[3] The strangeness of the broken song of half-awakened birds and of the faintly glimmering light of dawn at the window is deeply strange and sad to one who is dying.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.

BLOW, BUGLE

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

THE THROSTLE

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again,"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.

"New, new, new, new!" Is it then *so* new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.

THE MILKMAID'S SONG

SHAME upon you, Robin,
Shame upon you now!
Kiss me would you? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Daisies grow again,
Kingcups blow again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow

Robin came behind me,
Kiss'd me well I vow;
Cuff him could I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Swallows fly again,
Cuckoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow

Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now;
Help it can I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

SWEET AND LOW[1]

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

THE SWALLOW'S MESSAGE

O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

[1] The mother is holding her babe and listening to the sweet, low wind of the western sea. Her listening, mingled with her passionate eagerness for the return of her husband, gives the rising flow and ebb of thought in each stanza a perfect continuity, climax and repose.

O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.

SWEET IS TRUE LOVE

(Elaine's song)

SWEET is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow, let me die.

TURN, FORTUNE

(Enid's song)

TURN, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud:
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;
For man is man and master of his fate.

Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

LATE, LATE, SO LATE

LATE, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

FAR—FAR—AWAY

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far—far—away?

CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

JACK TAR

THEY say some foreign powers have laid their heads together
To break the pride of Britain, and bring her on her knees,
There's a treaty, so they tell us, of some dishonest fellows,
To break the noble pride of the Mistress of the Seas.
Up, Jack Tars, and save us!
The whole world shall not brave us!
Up and save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas!

We quarrel here at home, and they plot against us yonder,
They will not let an honest Briton sit at home at ease:
Up, Jack Tars, my hearties! and the devil take the parties!
Up and save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas!
Up, Jack Tars, and save us!
The whole world shall not brave us!
Up and save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas!

The lasses and the little ones, Jack Tars, they look to you!
The despots over yonder, let 'em do whate'er they please!
God bless the little isle where a man may still be true!
God bless the noble isle that is Mistress of the Seas!
Up, Jack Tars, and save us!
The whole world shall not brave us!
If you will save the pride of the Mistress of the Seas.

MARIANA

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots

That held the pear to the gable-wall.[1]
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.[2]

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.

She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:[3]
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn[4]
About the lonely moated grange.

[1] The fruit trees were tied like vines against the walls.

[2] The thatched roof on the old farm house had weeds growing on it. A ditch with stagnant water in it surrounded the house.

[3] In the night she could hear the weird cries of the marsh birds.

[4] With the first coming of dawn the wind often begins to blow.

She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd water slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.[5]
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;

[5] The green scum on stagnant ponds is a plant growth, a water moss.

The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam[6] lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

[6] As the western sun sent a beam of light across the hot dust-laden room the heaviness of life became thick and unbearable.

But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary" was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn,"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She awoke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say
"But now they beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan.
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known: cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,

Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:

Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not—
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

THE charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
And he call'd "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd and obey'd.
Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,
And he turn'd half round, and he bade his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
"Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the height,
With a wing push'd out to the left and a wing to the right,
And who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd up alone
Thro' the great gray slope of men,
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
Like an Englishman there and then;
All in a moment follow'd with force
Three that were next in their fiery course,
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had made—
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,
Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

Fell like a cannonshot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crash'd like a hurricane,

Broke thro' the mass from below,
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
Plunged up and down, to and fro,
Rode flashing blow upon blow,
Brave Inniskillens and Greys
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!
And some of us, all in amaze,
Who were held for a while from the fight,
And were only standing at gaze,
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
Folded its wings from the left and the right,
And roll'd them around like a cloud,—
O mad for the charge and the battle were we,
When our own good redcoats sank from sight,
Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,
And we turn'd to each other, whispering, all dismay'd,
"Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade!"

"Lost one and all" were the words
Mutter'd in our dismay;
But they rode like Victors and Lords
Thro' the forest of lances and swords
In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Stagger'd the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,
And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and reel'd
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!

THE REVENGE

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:
"'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen.
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

But anon the great San Philip, she be-thought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shattered navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said,
"My son: I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answer'd short:
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before

The month was out he left his father's house
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"
And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me:
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
"O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said

That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
"I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him— my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children."
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundred-fold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with flowery drops
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"

And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
That tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.

Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Is there confusion in the little isle?

Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,
When the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,

And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott?

By the margin, willow-veil'd
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
The Lady of Shalott?

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.

There she sees the highway near
    Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
    Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
    The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
    And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
    The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
    Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
    Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
    As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
    Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
    As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
    Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
    As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
    Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
    She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;

"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,

And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
"The Lady of Shalott."

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

TOMORROW

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to?
Whin, yer Honour? last year—
Standin' here by the bridge, when last yer Honour was here?
An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the morning,' "Tomorra,"
says she.
What did they call her, yer Honour?
They call'd her Molly Magee.
An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood that always manes to be kind,

But there's rason in all things, yer Honour, for Molly was out of her mind.

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night comin' down be the sthrame,
An' it seems to me now like a bit of yisther-day in a dhrame—
Here where yer Honour seen her—there was but a slip of a moon,
But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her bachelor, Danny O'Roon—
"You've been taking a dhrop o' the crathur,"[1] an' Danny says, "Troth, an' I been
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;[2]
But I must be lavin' ye soon." "Ochone are ye goin' away?"
"Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate."[3] he says, "over the say"—
"An' whin will ye meet me agin?" an I hard him, "Molly asthore,[4]
I'll meet you agin tomorra," says he, "be the chapel-door."
"An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?"
"O' Monday mornin," says he;
"An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?"
"Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!"
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour, that had no likin' for Dan,
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to come away from the man,
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me, as light as a lark,
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin wint into the dark.
But wirrah! the storm that night—the tundher, an' rain that fell,
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded Hell.

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an' Hiven in its glory smiled,
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles at her sleepin' child—
Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green, an she turn'd herself roun'
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for Danny was not to be foun',
An' many's the time that I watch'd her at mass lettin' down the tear,
For the Divil a Danny was there, yer Honour, for forty year.

[1] You've been drinking.
[2] Grog-shop.
[3] The wheat harvest in Saxony.
[4] Molly dear.

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose an' the white o' the May,
An' yer hair as black as the night, an' yer eyes as bright as the day!
Achora, yer laste little whishper was sweet as the lilt of a bird!
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music wid ivery word!
An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in sich an illigant han',
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as light as snow an the lan',
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver ye walkt in the shtreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an' laid himself undher yer feet,
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a half, me darlin', and he
'Ud 'a shot of his own soul dead for a kiss of ye, Molly Magee.

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I crack'd his skull for her sake,
An' he ped me back wid the best he could give at ould Donovan's wake—
For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan didn't come to the fore,
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she put thim all to the door.[5]
An', afther, I thried her meself av the bird 'ud come to me call,
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to naither at all, at all.

An' her nabours an' frinds 'ud consowl an' condowl wid her, airly and late,
"Your Danny," they says, "niver crasst over say to the Sassenach whate;
He's gone to the States,[6] aroon, an's he's married another wife,
An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of the thraithur agin in life!
An' to dhrame of a married man, death alive, is a mortial sin."
But Molly says, "I'd his hand-promise, an' shure he'll meet me agin."

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory, an' both in wan day,
She began to spake to herself, the crathur, an' whisper, an' say,
"Tomorra, Tomorra!" an' Father Molowny he tuk her in han',
"Molly, you're manin'," he says, "me dear, av I undherstan',
That ye'll meet your paärints agin an' yer Danny O'Roon afore God
Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints;"

[5] She would have nothing to do with them.
[6] The United States.

"Tomorra, Tommorra," she says, an' she didn't intind to desave,
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was as white as the snow on a grave.

Arrah now, here last month they wore diggin' the bog, an' they foun'
Dhrowned in black bog-wather a corp lyin' undher groun'.

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
"The Divil take all the black lan', for a blessin' 'ud come wid the green!"
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut hist bit o' turf for the fire?
But och! bad scran to the bogs whin they swallies the man intire!
An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all the light an' the glow,
An' there's hate enough, shure, widout thim in the Divil's kitchen below.

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard his Riverence say,
Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh for the Jidgemint day,
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep' the cat an's the dog,
But it ud' 'a been aisier work av they lived be an Irish bog.

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun' an the grass
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see it that wint in to mass—
But a frish gineration had riz, an' most of the ould was few,
An' I didn't know him meself, an' none of the parish knew.

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick, she was lamed av a knee,
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, "Div ye know him, Molly Magee?"
An' she stood up straight as the Queen of the world—she lifted her head—
"He said he would meet me tomorra!" an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye would start back agin into life,
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake like husban' an' wife.
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the frinds that was gone!

Sorra the silent throat but we hard it cryin' "Ochone!"[7]
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten childer, hansome an' tall,
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he had lost thim all.
Thin his Riverence buried thim both in wan grave be the dead boor-tree,
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his ould woman, Molly Magee.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom an' spring from the grass,
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye did—over yer Crass!
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his song to the Sun an' the Moon,
An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,
Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays an' opens the gate!
An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate
To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an' Saints an' 'Marthyrs galore,
An' singin' yer "Aves" an' "Pathers" for iver an ivermore.

An' now that I tould yer Honour whativer I had an' seen,
Yer Honour'ill give me a trifle to dhrink yer health in potheen.

NORTHERN FARMER[1]

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paäins:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braäins.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck[2] wi' tha, Sam: yon's a parson's 'ouse—
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk[3]
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

[7] O dear!

[1] A Scotch farmer is riding on horseback with his son and the sound of the horse's hoofs seems to say "Property, Property."

[2] A bone to pick, or a matter to settle.

[3] This week.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

Seeäid her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?— the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

Do'ant be stunt:[4] taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty:—I niver giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an's kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle[5] her breäd:
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissén clear
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

'An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taäil they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd[6] yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maakin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

[4] Obstinate.
[5] Earn.
[6] Or fow-welter'd—said of a sheep lying on its back.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha?—an ass as near as mays nowt
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!—the bees is as fell as owt.[7]

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence![8]
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder,[9] fur them as 'as it's the best.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.
Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.[10]
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.[11]

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck[12] cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.[13]

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—
Coom oop, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—
Proputty, proputty, proputty—canter an' canter awaäy.

[7] The flies are as fierce as anything.
[8] Break me a piece of brush from the roadside to keep the flies off my horse.
[9] People with property stand the best chance in the next world.
[10] It takes honest work to get property.
[11] Father worked himself to death, but died rich.
[12] Wrigglesby Creek.
[13] Father earned a lot of land, but I've earned, and will earn, more.

BROWNING

LYRICS AND SHORT POEMS

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LIFE IN A LOVE[1]

Escape me?
Never—
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,

Me the loving and you the loth,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.
My life is a fault at last, I fear:
It seems too much like a fate, indeed!
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.
But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And baffled, get up and begin again,—
So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.
While, look but once from your farthest bound
At me so deep in the dust and dark,
No sooner the old hope goes to ground
Than a new one, straight to the self-same mark,
I shape me—
Ever
Removed![2]

LOVE IN A LIFE

Room after room,
I hunt the house through
We inhabit together.
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her—
Next time, herself!—not the trouble[3] behind her
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!

[1] As long as there is something to love, some ideal to strive for, there will be motive-force, energy, and zest in living.

[2] Although we may be far removed from the attainment of an ideal, yet the pursuit of that ideal is renewed in spite of repeated failure.

[3] The love, an ideal, that just eludes us, makes us troubled with restlessness in its pursuit.

As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew;
Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

Yet the day wears,
And the door succeeds door;
I try the fresh fortune—
Range the wide house from the wing to the centre.
Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter.
Spend my whole day in the quest,—who cares?
But 't is twilight, you see,—with such suites to explore,
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune![1]

SONG FROM "PIPPA PASSES"

The year 's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled;
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn;
God 's in His heaven—
All 's right with the world!

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,[2]
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!
And after April, when May follows
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover

[1] No matter how long and eager the pursuit of an ideal may be, it will always escape, and there will always be unexplored alcoves in which we may demand that it be found.

[2] The first buds to come out in the spring may be noticed around the trunk of some tree where the low brush gets the warmth.

Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush: he sings each song twice over
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And, tho' the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower![1]

GIVE A ROUSE[2]

King Charles, and who 'll do him right[3] now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found[4] me in wine you drank once?

(Chorus) *King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side[5] that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's[6] damned troopers shot him?

[1] Home beauties are brightest and best.

[2] Drink deeply and heartily the health of another.

[3] Who will do him justice in drinking his health at this moment.

[4] Provided me with wine that was free to you.

[5] The speaker, who is an old follower of King Charles, calls himself a fool with a fond and hearty spirit.

[6] The troops of Oliver Cromwell shot his son.

(Chorus) *King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who 's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here 's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

BOOT AND SADDLE[1]

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many 's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—
"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,[2]
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay![3]
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?
"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

WANTING IS—WHAT?

Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the blot?

[1] The speaker is a follower of King Charles. Word comes that the Roundheads are attacking his castle forty miles away. He knows that his wife, Gertrude, will hold the castle until he comes. He gives his order to "boot, saddle, to horse and away" with triumphant confidence and courage. There is a wild joy of victory in this command.

[2] The act of a roebuck with horns lowered against the hounds suggests a fight to the death, in which the buck tosses the dogs.

[3] Gertrude is refusing to surrender.

Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame:[1]
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant[2] thro' the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath[3]
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!

SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine,—wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—[4]
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)[5]
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;

[1] A picture frame without the picture of a loved one in it is blank. It is like a rose bower or a costly house without a loved one.

[2] Pant suggests the eagerness of love.

[3] The roses are moved by the coming of the loved one.

[4] Trust is a greater good than truth; and the purest trust, as the greatest good in the world, may be experienced in the kiss of one girl.

[5] A crystal of spar, like a prism, breaks light into its colors.

Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,[1]
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:[2]
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.[3]
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.[4]

MEETING AT NIGHT[5]

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match.
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING[6]

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:

[1] Friends have heard of the beauty of my star, the thing I love, until they want to see the beauty.

[2] When I try to show the beauty to others, this beauty loses its unique essence. Like a bird that sings or a flower that blooms, the finest qualities of beauty and goodness are hidden from all except the one who loves them.

[3] The public must solace itself with the big stars that everybody can see.

[4] Life reveals the beauty-of-goodness only when it is loved.

[5] A seaman is returning to shore and to his home in the moonlight at close of day.

[6] Perhaps the speaker in this is a wife who watches her husband go out in his boat towards the golden sunrise, while she stays at home. As the day comes suddenly the husband must go to his work, and the wife must stay alone, because the world needs men to do its work.

And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

AT THE WINDOW

(From James Lee's Wife)

Ah, Love, but a day.
  And the world has changed![1]
The sun's away,
  And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped,
  And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped.

Look in my eyes!
  Wilt thou change too?
Should I fear surprise?
  Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
  In the good and true,
With the changing year?

Thou art a man,
  But I am thy love.
For the lake, its swan;
  For the dell, its dove;
And for thee—(oh, haste!)
  Me, to bend above,
Me, to hold embraced.

BY THE FIRESIDE

(From James Lee's Wife)

Is all our fire of shipwreck wood,[2]
  Oak and pine?

[1] A wife feels that the passion of love between her and her husband has cooled quickly, yet with passionate longing she wants it to return.

[2] It seems tragic that life should be warmed from the shipwrecks of others.

Oh, for the ills half-understood,
The dim dead woe
Long ago
Befallen this bitter coast of France!
Well, poor sailors took their chance;
I take mine.

A ruddy shaft our fire must shoot
O'er the sea;
Do sailors eye the casement—mute,
Drenched and stark,
From their bark—
And envy, gnash their teeth for hate
O' the warm safe house and happy freight
—Thee and me?[2]

God help you, sailors, at your need!
Spare the curse!
For some ships, safe in port indeed,
Rot and rust,
Run to dust,
All thro' worms i' the wood, which crept,
Gnawed our hearts out while we slept:
That is worse.[3]

Who lived here before us two?
Old-world pairs.
Did a woman ever—would I knew!—
Watch the man
With whom began
Love's voyage, full-sail,—(now, gnash your teeth!)
When planks start, open hell beneath
Unawares?[4]

[2] Sailors in hardship may see the lights of homes on shore, and envy the warm soft life.

[3] Life apparently safe and happy may be rusted and heartsick.

[4] Many a woman who began love's voyage with happiness, has discovered unawares that the planks of love's ship have sprung open, leaving nothing but hell for the future.

IN THE DOORWAY

(From James Lee's Wife)

THE swallow has set her six young on the rail,
And looks seaward:
The water's in stripes like a snake, olive-pale
To the leeward,—
On the weather-side, black, spotted white with the wind.
"Good fortune departs, and disaster's behind,"
Hark, the wind with its wants and its infinite wail![1]

Our fig-tree, that leaned for the saltness, has furled
Her five fingers,
Each leaf like a hand opened wide to the world
Where there lingers
No glint of the gold, Summer sent for her sake:
How the vines writhe in rows, each impaled on its stake!
My heart shrivels up and my spirit shrinks curled.

Yet here are we two; we have love, house enough,
With the field there,
This house of four rooms, that field red and rough,
Tho' it yield there,
For the rabbit that robs, scarce a blade or a bent;
If a magpie alight now, it seems an event;
And they both will be gone at November's rebuff.

But why must cold spread? but wherefore bring change
To the spirit,
God meant should mate his with an infinite range,
And inherit
His power to put life in the darkness and cold?
Oh, live and love worthily, bear and be bold!
Whom Summer made friends of, let Winter estrange![2]

[1] The signs of fall and rough weather bring somberness and chill in spite of love.

[2] It is sometimes hard for love to rise above the wintertime of life, and yet love always has great courage and will.

NAY BUT YOU

Nay but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

Because, you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over:
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her?
Above this tress, and this, I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

ONE WAY OF LOVE

All June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
To-day I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!
Break the string; fold music's wing:
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion—heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'T is well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they!

EVELYN HOPE

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Thro' worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come, at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

WHERE the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—

Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,

While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Thro' the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.
And I know—while thus the quiet coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,

Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

A SERENADE AT THE VILLA

THAT was I you heard last night.
When there rose no moon at all,
Nor, to pierce the strained and tight
Tent of heaven, a planet small:
Life was dead, and so was light.

Not a twinkle from the fly,
Not a glimmer from the worm;
When the crickets stopped their cry,
When the owls forbore a term,
You heard music; that was I.

Earth turned in her sleep with pain,
Sultrily suspired for proof:
In at heaven and out again,
Lightning!—where it broke the roof,
Bloodlike, some few drops of rain.

What they could my words expressed,
O my love, my all, my one!
Singing helped the verses best,
And when singing's best was done,
To my lute I left the rest.

So wore night; the East was gray,
White the broad-faced hemlock flowers:
There would be another day;

Ere its first of heavy hours
Found me, I had passed away.

What became of all the hopes,
Words and song and lute as well?
Say, this struck you: "When life gropes
Feebly for the path where fell
Light last on the evening slopes,—
One friend in that path shall be,
To secure my step from wrong;
One to count night day for me,
Patient through the watches long,
Serving most with none to see."

Never say—as something bodes—
"So, the worst has yet a worse!
When life halts 'neath double loads,
Better the task-master's curse
Than such music on the roads!
When no moon succeeds the sun,
Nor can pierce the midnight's tent
Any star, the smallest one,
While some drops, where lightning rent,
Show the final storm begun—
When the fire-fly hides its spot,
When the garden-voices fail
In the darkness thick and hot,—
Shall another voice avail,
That shape be where these are not?
Has some plague a longer lease,
Proffering its help uncouth?
Can't one even die in peace?
As one shuts one's eyes on youth,
Is that face the last one sees?"

Oh how dark your villa was,
Windows fast and obdurate!

How the garden grudged me grass
Where I stood—the iron gate
Ground its teeth to let me pass!

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path—how soft to pace!
This May—what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,[1]
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Thro' the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers: we—
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
—I and she!

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;

[1] Doubts as to the future goodness of life come like insidious enemies, yet past experiences in goodness should give assurance for the future.

Where he stands, the Arch Fear[1] in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Tho' a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.[2]
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.[3]
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.[4]
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the elements' rage, the field-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

THE PATRIOT[5]

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

[1] Death.

[2] Though barriers are broken down, the fighting must still go on.

[3] Without meeting death with open senses.

[4] Life that is full of gladness has not paid its share of pain and sorrow. Every good fighter in life wants to pay his share.

[5] The speaker with his hands tied behind him is walking through empty streets on his way to the guillotine. A year ago he came in triumph.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
  The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
  But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was *I* who leaped at the sun
  To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
  And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
  Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight, is all allow,
  At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot,[2] I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,[3]
  A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
  For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
  In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
  Me?"—God might question; now instead,
'T is God shall repay: I am safer so.[4]

[2] It is strange that human mobs will scramble for the front seats at a public execution, or even seek to get a souvenir of the victim.

[3] Unnecessary harshness and cruelty is a common fact in the punishment of crime.

[4] Men, like Lincoln, have died at the height of their popularity. They have been paid by the world. They still must meet their debt to God.

MY LAST DUCHESS[1]

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her?
I said "Frà Pandolf" by design: for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy.
She had a heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,— good! but thanked

[1] A rich duke is showing the envoy, who comes from a count to arrange for the marriage of his daughter to the duke, his art treasures. The greatest of these is a painting of his former wife. As the duke draws back the curtain from before this painting, the beauty and purity suggested there fascinates him; for it is a beauty and purity that has always been beyond his comprehension or his power to own.

Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who 'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop.
Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles topped together.
There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We 'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE STATUE AND AND THE BUST

THERE'S a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the East
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride increased—

They felt by its beats her heart expand —
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great Duke Ferdinand."

That self-same instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home to-day."

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes:
The Past was a sleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held, that self-same night,
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

The Duke (with the statue's face in the square)
Turned, in the midst of his multitude,
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued—

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of the thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed-chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Thro' a certain window facing the East,
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride:
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

'T is only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
"My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing, and sleep:
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled " 'T was a very funeral,
Your lady will think, this feast of ours,—
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And try if Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favour for me so mean!

But, alas! my lady leaves the South;
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth:

Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

And then to himself—"Which night shall bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool—
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool
For to-night the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance:

For I ride—what should I do but ride?
And, passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well betide!"

So said, so done: nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth:
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit, in winter's dearth,
By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain worth:

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy; better wait:
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she—she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was done,
And she turned from the picture at night to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam
The glory dropped from their youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream;

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked,—
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

Make me a face on the window there,
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth—my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" and he bade them fetch

Some subtle moulder of brazen shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

In the very square I have crossed so oft:
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

While the mouth and the brow stay brave in bronze—
Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!'

And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! While these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
For their end was a crime."—Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test.
As a virtue golden through and through,

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play!—is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will.

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Tho' the end in sight was a vice, I say.

A TOCCATA[1] OF GALUPPI'S

Oh Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;
But altho' I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good it brings
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

Ay, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched by . . . . what you call

[1] A toccata was played with light, quick touches on the keys of the clavichord. It is well suited to the expression of the lighter grace and vanity of life. As the speaker in this poem plays an old Italian toccata, the life of the old time comes into his imagination and makes him feel grim and old in sadness.

. . . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England—it's as if I saw it all.
Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?

Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

Well, and it was graceful of them: they'd break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions—"Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths—"Life might last! we can but try!"

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence[2] till it must be answered to!

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

[2] In the midst of music that mixes sadness with a hope of lasting human pleasures, there comes an insistent strain that is dominant over the rest of the music, and that seems to say, "Dust and Ashes."

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep thro' every nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be discerned.

Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction—you'll not die, it cannot be!

As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth, they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

UP AT A VILLA—DOWN IN THE CITY

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Tho' winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Tho' all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in:

You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.

Noon strikes—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart,
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

MUCKLE-MOUTH MEG

Frowned the Laird on the Lord: "So, red-handed I catch thee?
Death-doomed by our Law of the Border!
We've a gallows outside and a chiel to dispatch thee:
Who trespasses—hangs: all's in order."

He met frown with smile, did the young English gallant:
Then the Laird's dame: "Nay, Husband, I beg!

He's comely: be merciful! Grace for the callant
—If he marries our Muckle-mouth Meg!"

"No mile-wide-mouthed monster of yours do I marry:
Grant rather the gallows!" laughed he.
"Foul fare kith and kin of you—why do you tarry?"
"To tame your fierce temper!" quothe she.

"Shove him quick in the Hole, shut him fast for a week:
Cold, darkness and hunger work wonders:
Who lion-like roars now, mouse-fashion will squeak,
And 'it rains' soon succeed to 'it thunders.' "

A week did he bide in the cold and the dark
—Not hunger: for duly at morning
In flitted a lass, and a voice like a lark
Chirped "Muckle-mouth Meg still ye're scorning?

Go hang, but here's parritch to hearten ye first!"
"Did Meg's muckle-mouth boast within some
Such music as yours, mine should match it or burst:
No frog-jaws! So tell folk, my Winsome!"

Soon week came to end, and, from Hole's door set wide,
Out he marched, and there waited the lassie:
"Yon gallows, or Muckle-mouth Meg for a bride!
Consider! Sky's blue and turf's grassy:

Life's sweet: shall I say ye wed Muckle-mouth Meg?"
"Not I," quoth the stout heart: "too eerie
The mouth that can swallow a bubblyjock's egg:[1]
Shall I let it munch mine? Never, Dearie!"

"Not Muckle-mouth Meg? Wow, the obstinate man!
Perhaps he would rather wed me!"
"Ay, would he—with just for a dowry your can!"
"I'm Muckle-mouth Meg," chirruped she.

[1] A turkey's egg.

"Then so—so—so—so—" as he kissed her apace—
"Will I widen thee out till thou turnest
From Margaret Minnikin-mou',[2] by God's grace,
To Muckle-mouth Meg in good earnest!"

[2] From a little mouth.

COUNT GISMOND[1]

CHRIST God who savest man, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honour, 'twas with all his strength.

And doubtlessly, ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in queen's array
To give our tourney prize away.

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 'twas all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast;
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

[1] A wife is telling a dear friend of the time her husband protected her from false accusations.

But no: they let me laugh, and sing
  My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
  A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

And come out on the morning troop
  Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me queen, and made me stoop
  Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

And they could let me take my state
  And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
  My queen's-day—Oh I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

However that be, all eyes were bent
  Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 'twas time I should present
  The victor's crown, but . . . . there, 'twill last
No long time . . . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
  With his two boys: I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
  Forth boldly—to my face, indeed—
But Gauthier? and he thundered "Stay!"
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!

Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet
  About her! Let her shun the chaste,

Or lay herself before their feet!
  Shall she, whose body I embraced
A night long, queen it in the day?
For honour's sake no crowns, I say!"

I? What I answered? As I live,
  I never fancied such a thing
As answer possible to give.
  What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul.

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
  That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,
  I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan: who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

He strode to Gauthier, in this throat
  Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote
  In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,
And damned, the truth stood up instead.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
  The heart of the joy, with my content
In watching Gismond unalloyed
  By any doubt of the event:
God took that on him—I was bid
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

Did I not watch him while he let
  His armourer just brace his greaves,
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
  The while! His foot . . . . my memory leaves

No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
  Was finished, prone lay the false knight,
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:
  Gismond flew at him, using no sleight
O' the sword, but open-breasted drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
  And said, "Here die, but end thy breath
In full confession, lest thou fleet
  From my first, to God's second death!
Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have lied
To God and her," he said, and died.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
  —What safe my heart holds, though no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
  My powers forever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

Over my head his arm he flung
  Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword (that dripped by me and swung)
  A little shifted in its belt:
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

So, 'mid the shouting multitude
  We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
  Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

Our elder boy has got the clear
  Great brow; tho' when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . . Gismond here?
  And have you brought my tercel[2] back?
I was just telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May.

[2] When her husband comes to them the wife quickly changes the subject to her hunting hawk, which Gismond is bringing to her.

ENOCH ARDEN

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON

CONDENSED BY R. D. T. HOLLISTER

1. LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too," said Philip, "turn and turn about:"

When, if they quarrell'd Enoch stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,

Shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch.
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,

That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

2. So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honourable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore

Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

Yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,

But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

3. Enoch parted with his old sea friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand—
The space was narrow—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him: and then he said:
"Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it."
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, "and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one—

Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees,
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: "O Enoch, you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day); get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came,
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said,
"Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

4. She, when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.
Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding "what would Enoch say?"
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,

Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering—ere she was aware—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
"Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,
May be some little comfort;" therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly,
"Annie, I came to ask a favour of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply,
"Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

"I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go his weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—

For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd, "I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd
"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwealt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

5. Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gained
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:

Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him,
"Come with us, Father Philip," he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest" she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.
"Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said,
"I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:
"Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,

And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last.
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
"You have been as God's good angel in our house.
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"
"I am content," he answer'd, "to be loved
A little after Enoch." "O," she cried,
Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!" Philip sadly said,
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." "Nay," she cried,
"I am bound: you have my promise—in a year:
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"
And Philip answer'd, "I will bide my year."

6. That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she ask'd.
"Yes, if the nuts," he said, "be ripe again:

Come out and see." But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take your own time."
And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-suffereance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign, "my Enoch, is he gone?"
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the Holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under the palm-tree." That was nothing to her:
No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried
'Hosanna in the highest!' " Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him,
"There is no reason why we should not wed."
"Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
Being with child: but when her child was born,
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

7. And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figurehead
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:

Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows

And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns, and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,

Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

8. Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the "Good Fortune," from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay:
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamour. Downward from his mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard:
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:

And clothes they gave him and free passage home;
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to anyone,
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking "dead or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

9. But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed,
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost,"
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering "cast away and lost;"
Again in deeper inward whispers "lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;
"If I might look on her sweet face again

And know that she is happy." So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him.
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw

The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate under foot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.

Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

10. He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"
He said to Miriam, "that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;" and he thought
"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know.
I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Yet since he did but labour for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.

For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, then he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking, "after I am gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,
"Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamour'd the good woman, "hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."
"Swear," added Enoch, sternly, "on the book."
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
"His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man." At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be." Enoch said again,
"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,

And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only, "See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us any thing but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be.
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:

It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice, "A sail! a sail!
I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY R. D. T. HOLLISTER

WHEN CHARLES DICKENS wrote "A Christmas Carol," he gave to the people of all time a great joyful sermon on the redeeming power of the Christmas spirit. He tells us of a hardened old soul made young, warm-hearted, and happy by the rebirth within him of friendliness, generosity, and good-will. Ebenezer Scrooge, with whom this story is concerned, was a tight-fisted, cold-hearted, self-centered man of business. Even at the Christmas season he felt nothing of the Christmas spirit. But through the mysteries of a dream he became awake to the opportunities and joys of loving others. The ghost of his long-dead partner, Jacob Marley, and the phantoms of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet To Come warned him back to his better self.

This story that Dickens has told is a song of glad tidings and great joy to all of us; for in it we find the selfishness and ugliness in ourselves fading out, and our faith in the goodness and lovableness of life welling up. Our impulses to generous living are quickened, and we feel a new great-heartedness stirring within us.

In condensing this story for oral interpretation it is necessary to omit large portions; but in spite of these omissions, or perhaps by the aid of them, the essential point and pleasure of the story may be largely enjoyed. Those who wish to read all for themselves may go again to their familiar copies of this great story.

1. MARLEY was dead. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail. Scrooge knew he was dead? How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend and sole mourner. Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it

stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas. External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he.

2. Once upon a time,—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve,—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather, foggy withal, and he could hear the people in the court outside go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, Bob Cratchet, who, in a dismal little cell beyond, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge. "Humbug!"

"Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew gayly. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

"Bah! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas-time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart."

"Uncle!"

"Nephew! Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine. Much good may it do you!"

"I am sure I have always thought of Christmas-time, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"

3. The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible to the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark forever.

"Let me hear another sound from you, and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation."

"Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow."

Scrooge said that he would see him in—— Yes, indeed, he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

"But why? Why?"

"Why did you get married?"

"Because I fell in love."

"Because you fell in love! Good-afternoon!"

"Why cannot we be friends?"

"Good-afternoon!"

"I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. But I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!"

"Good-afternoon!"

"And A Happy New Year!"

"Good-afternoon!"

His nephew left the room without an angry word. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge, for he returned them cordially.

This clerk, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office.

"Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the gentlemen. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago, this very night."

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Good-afternoon, gentlemen!"

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened. A small boy

whose nose was nipped by the hungry cold stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol; but at the first sound of

"God bless you, merry gentleman,
May nothing you dismay."

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

"You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?"

"If quite convenient, sir."

"It's not convenient and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill used, I'll be bound? And yet you don't think me ill used when I pay a day's wages for no work."

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

"A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. "But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning."

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl.

4. Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering building. Nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands.

Now there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the City of London.

Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years-dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change,—not a knocker, but Marley's face. Marley's face. It had a dismal light about it, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look; with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. Though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. As Scrooge looked fixedly at this it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle. He did pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said, "Pooh, pooh!" and closed it with a bang. The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door and walked across the hall, and up the stairs, slowly, trimming his candle as he went.

5. But, before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his room to see that all was right. Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa, a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little sauce pan of gruel upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his

dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel. It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. As he sat in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated, for some purpose now forgotten, with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that, as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house. This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased, as they had begun together, and were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains. The cellar door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise, much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it!"

6. His color changed, though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him! Marley's Ghost!" and fell again. The same face, the very same. Marley, in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind. Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

"How now!" said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. "What do you want with me?"

"Much!"—Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

"Who are you?"

"Ask me who I was."

"Who were you, then? You're particular, for a shade."

"In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley."

"Can you—can you sit down?"

"I can."

"Do it, then."

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair. But the Ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace as if he were quite used to it.

"You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost.

"I don't," said Scrooge.

"What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your own senses?"

"I don't know."

"Why do you doubt your senses?"

"Because, a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!"

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror, for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones. To sit staring at those fixed glazed eyes in silence, for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him.

7. "You see this toothpick?" said Scrooge, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

"I do."

"You are not looking at it."

"But I see it, notwithstanding."

"Well! I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of

my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; humbug!"

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook his chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror when, the phantom taking off the bandage round his head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, his lower jaw dropped down upon his breast! Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

"Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?"

"Man of the worldly mind! Do you believe in me or not?"

"I do. I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?"

"It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world,—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness!"

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook his chain and wrung his shadowy hands.

"You are fettered. Tell me why?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have labored on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!"

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable; but he could see nothing.

8. "Jacob!" he said imploringly. "Old Jacob Marley, tell me more! Speak comfort to me, Jacob!"

"I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is

all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house, —mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!"

"Seven years dead, and traveling all the time?"

"The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse."

"You travel fast?"

"On the wings of the wind."

"You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years."

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked his chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

"Oh! captive, bound and double-ironed," cried the phantom. "Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness! Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!"

"But you were always a good man of business, Jacob."

"Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

He held up his chain at arm's length, as if that were the cause of all his unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

"At this time of the rolling year I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me?"

9. Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going

on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly. "Hear me!" cried the Ghost. "My time is nearly gone."

"I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob! Pray!"

"How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer."

"You were always a good friend to me. Thankee!"

"You will be haunted by Three Spirits."

"Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?"

"It is."

"I—I think I'd rather not."

"Without their visits you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first tomorrow, when the bell tolls one."

"Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?"

"Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third, upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!"

When he said these words, the spectre took his wrapper from the table, and bound it round his head as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound his teeth made when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with his chain wound over and about his arm.

10. The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step he took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley's Ghost held up his hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped. Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear; for on the raising of the hand he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inex-

pressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window, desperate in his curiosity. He looked out. The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with the one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to his ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom he saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power forever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home. Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say, "Humbug!" but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose, went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep on the instant.

11. Then the Spirit of Christmas Past came to Scrooge and took him back to the place where he had lived as a boy. Here "he was conscious of a thousand odors floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long forgotten." The Spirit took him to his old school where he saw himself lonely at Christmas time until his sister came to take him home.

The Spirit stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" said Scrooge. "Was I apprenticed here!"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig sitting behind such a high desk that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:—

"Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out, in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:—

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-'prentice.

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas Ebenezer! Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!"

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. The floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast, substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the

other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping.

12. There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was a great piece of cold roast, and there was a great piece of cold boiled, and there were mince-pies. But the great effect of the evening came when old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons; and when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds, which were under a counter in the back shop.

"A small matter," said the Ghost of Christmas Past, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves praise?"

"It isn't that—it isn't that. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up; what then? The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing particular," said Scrooge.

"Something, I think?" the Ghost insisted.

"No," said Scrooge,—"no. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all."

13. Then the spirit of Christmas Present came to Scrooge and led him to many scenes of Christmas rejoicing. It showed him the home of his clerk, Bob Cratchit, where the needs and cares of the family were lost in the pleasures of Christmas. It showed him the Christmas joys of a miner's humble home and of a lighthouse-keeper's solitary, sea-washed habitation. It took him to his nephew's house where Christmas merriment was high, and Scrooge's nephew was laughing heartily.

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him, too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance. It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that, while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor. When Scrooge's nephew laughed, holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions, Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends, being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily.

"He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!" cried Scrooge's nephew. "He believed it, too!"

"More shame for him, Fred!" said Scrooge's niece indignantly.

She was very pretty; exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed,—as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head.

"He's a comical old fellow," said Scrooge's nephew, "that's the truth; and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his

offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him."

"I'm sure he is very rich, Fred," hinted Scrooge's niece. "At least you always tell me so."

"What of that, my dear?" said Scrooge's nephew. "His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit us with it."

"I have no patience with him," observed Scrooge's niece.

"Oh, I have!" said Scrooge's nephew. "I am sorry for him: I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. He loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying, 'Uncle Scrooge, how are you?' If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something; and I think I shook him, yesterday."

The others laughed, at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment.

14. After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a glee or catch, I can assure you; especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. When this strain of music sounded, Scrooge thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands,

without resorting to the sexton's spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. There was first a game at blindman's buff. Of course there was; a game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, his nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last his plump sister-in-law, falling into a similar state, cried out:—

"I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!"

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"It's your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!"

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes."

"He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is! He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!"

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his

nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick-beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door, and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

15. Then the Spirit of Christmas Yet To Come lead Scrooge to the heart of the city; on 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups. The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men.

"No," said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, "I don't know much about it either way. I only know he's dead."

"When did he die?"

"Last night, I believe."

"Why, what was the matter with him?" asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. "I thought he'd never die."

"God knows," said the first, with a yawn.

"What has he done with his money?" asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

"I haven't heard," said the man with the large chin, yawning again. "He hasn't left it to me. That's all I know."

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

"It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, for, upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party, and volunteer?"

"I don't mind going if a lunch is provided," observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. "But I must be fed, if I make one."

Another laugh, then speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of

the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognized its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed beetling shop, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal were bought. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a gray-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without by a frowzy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line.

16. Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black. All three burst into a laugh.

"Let the charwoman be the first!" cried she who had entered first. "Let the laundress be the second; and let the undertaker's man be the third. Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we haven't all three met here without meaning it!"

"You couldn't have met in a better place," said old Joe, removing his pipe from his mouth. "Come into the parlor."

The parlor was a space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire together with an old stairrod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again. While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

"What odds, then? What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did!"

"That's true, indeed!" said the laundress. "No man more

so. Who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?"

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

"If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle, Joe."

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and, having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large, heavy roll of some dark stuff.

"What do you call this?" said Joe. "Bed-curtains?"

"Ah! Bed-curtains!"

"You don't mean to say you took 'em down, rings and all, with him lying there?"

"Yes, I do. Why not? Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now."

"His blankets?" asked Joe.

"Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say."

17. "I hope he didn't die of anything catching? Eh?" said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

"Don't you be afraid of that. I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah! You may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole it in, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me."

"What do you call wasting of it?" asked old Joe.

"Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure," replied the woman, with a laugh. "Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose it isn't good enough for anything. It's quite as be-

coming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one."

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust which could hardly have been greater though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the women, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it. "This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spirit!" said Scrooge, shuddering. "I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way now. Merciful Heaven, what is this?"

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed,—a bare, uncurtained bed, on which, beneath a ragged sheet, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man. Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, gripping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

There was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearthstone. What they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

"Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

18. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come then conveyed him, into the resorts of business men.

"This court" said Scrooge, "through which we hurry now is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!"

The Spirit stopped. Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Spirit then led him to an iron gate.

A churchyard. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place! The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One.

"Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point," said Scrooge, "answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only?"

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

"Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead," said Scrooge. "But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!" Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

"Am I that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees. "No, Spirit! Oh, no, no! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope? Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life! I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!"

In his agony he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him. Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost. Yes! and the bedpost was his own, the bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

"They are not torn down," he cried, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms,—"they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here,—I am here, the shadows of the things

that would have been may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!"

19. "I don't know what to do!" cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath. "I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. A Merry Christmas, to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head. No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; golden sunlight; sweet fresh air; merry bells.

"What's today?" cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes.

"EH?" returned the boy.

"What's to-day, my fine fellow?"

"To-day! Why, CHRISTMAS DAY."

"It's Christmas Day!" said Scrooge to himself. "I haven't missed it."

"Do you know the poulterer's, in the next street?" Scrooge inquired.

"I should hope I did," replied the lad.

"A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?"

"What, the one as big as me?" returned the boy.

"What a delightful boy!" said Scrooge. "It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!"

"It's hanging there now," replied the boy.

"Is it?" said Scrooge. "Go and buy it."

"You're fooling!" exclaimed the boy.

"No, no," said Scrooge, "I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell 'em to bring it here, that I may give them the directions where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I'll give you half a crown!"

The boy was off like a shot.

"I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's," whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands. "He shan't know who sends it."

20. The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went downstairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer's man. As he stood there, the knocker caught his eye.

"I shall love it as long as I live!" cried Scrooge, patting it with his hand. "What an honest expression it has in its face! It's a wonderful knocker!—Here's the Turkey. Hallo! Whoop! How are you? Merry Christmas!"

It was a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped 'em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

"Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town," said Scrooge. "You must have a cab."

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaster over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself "all in his best" and at last got out into the streets. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, that three or four good-humored fellows said, "Good-morning, sir! A Merry Christmas to you!" And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted the children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows; and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's

house. He passed the door a dozen times before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it.

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?"

"He's in the dining-room sir, along with mistress. I'll show you upstairs, if you please."

"Thankee. He knows me," said Scrooge. "I'll go in here, my dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door.

"Fred!" said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started!

"Why, bless my soul!" cried Fred, "who's that?"

"It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?"

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did every one, when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, won-der-ful happiness!

21. Scrooge was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there! If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon. And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the tank. His hat was off before he opened the door; his comforter, too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

"Hallo!" growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice as near as he could feign it. "What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?"

"I am very sorry, sir," said Bob. "I am behind my time."

"You are?" repeated Scrooge. "Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please."

"It's only once a year, sir," pleaded Bob, appearing from

the tank. "It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir."

"Now, I'll tell you what, my friend," said Scrooge; "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore," he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the tank again.—"and therefore, I am about to raise your salary. A Merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family. Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i."

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all and infinitely more. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old City knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset. His own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us. And so, God bless Us, Every One!

SILAS MARNER

BY

GEORGE ELIOT

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

SILAS MARNER is one of the best-loved novels in the English language. It is a story of a young, trusting, simple-hearted English weaver, driven into years of loneliness and isolation by broken faith in man and God; and then led back into paths of mellowing happiness and peace by the living needs and the loving presence of a little child. The scenes take place in the early part of the nineteenth century in the village of Raveloe; an important looking, but isolated, village in the rich central plain of merry England.

1. In those days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses, and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace, had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak, there might be seen, in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallied undersized men, who, by the side of the brawny country-folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race. The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland, dark against the early winter sunset; for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag?, and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden. The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or long rolls of linen, was not quite sure that this trade of weaving could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted; and those scattered linen-weavers, emigrants from the town into the country, were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits which belong to a state of loneliness.

In the early years of this century, such a linen-weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedge rows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone-pit. It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent, short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience, but for the villagers near whom he had come to settle it had mysterious peculiarities which made them hold aloof from him as from a dead man come to life again. At the end of fifteen years the Raveloe men felt much the same way towards Silas Marner as at the beginning. There was only one important change which the years had brought: it was, that Master Marner had laid by a fine sight of money somewhere, and that he could buy up "bigger men" than himself.

2. Marner's life before he came to Raveloe had been filled with the close fellowship of a narrow religious sect known as the church assembling in Lantern Yard. There he was regarded as a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith; and a peculiar interest had centered in him ever since he had fallen, at a prayer-meeting, into a mysterious rigidity and suspension of consciousness, which lasting for an hour or more, had been mistaken for death. To have sought a medical explanation for this catyleptic visitation would have been regarded by Silas and his friends as a willful self-exclusion from the spiritual significance that might lie therein. However, his best friend, William Dane, with whom he had lived in such close companionship that the Lantern Yard brethern called them David and Jonathan, remarked to Silas that this trance looked more like a visitation of satan than a mark of divine favor. Silas, to whose trusting nature William Dane seemed perfect, received this remark without resentment, but not without deep pain. He did not know, however, that William had a secret interest in a young servantwoman named Sarah to whom Silas Marner was engaged.

About this time the senior deacon was taken dangerously

ill, and, being a childless widower, he was tended night and day by some of the younger brethren. Silas frequently took his turn in the night-watching with Wlliiam, the one relieving the other at two in the morning. One night Silas, sitting up by the deacon's bedside, observed that his usually audible breathing had ceased. Examination convinced him that the deacon was dead—had been dead some time, for the limbs were rigid. Silas asked himself if he had been asleep, and looked at the clock: it was already four in the morning. How was it that William had not come? In much anxiety he went to seek for help, and soon there were several friends assembled in the house, and Silas went away to his work. At six o'clock William and the minister came to summon Silas to Lantern Yard, to meet the church members there. When he was seated in the vestry, in front of the minister, with the eyes of those who to him represented God's people fixed solemnly upon him, the minister took out a pocket-knife, showed it to Silas, and asked him if he knew where he had left that knife? Silas said, he did not know that he had left it anywhere out of his own pocket—but he was trembling at this strange interrogation. He was then exhorted not to hide his sin. The knife had been found in the bureau by the departed deacon's bedside—found in the place where the little bag of church money had lain. Some hand had removed that bag. Whose hand could it be, if not that of the man to whom the knife belonged? For some time Silas was mute with astonishment: then he said, "God will clear me. I know nothing about the knife being there, or the money being gone. Search me and my dwelling: You will find nothing but three pound five of my own savings, which William Dane knows I have had these six months."

"The proof is heavy against you, brother Marner. The money was taken in the night last past, and no man was with our departed brother but you, for William Dane declares that he was hindered by sudden sickness from going to take his place." "I must have slept," said Silas. "Or I must have had another visitation like that which you have all seen me under, so that the thief must have come and gone while I was not in

the body. But I say again, search me and my dwelling, for I have been nowhere else." The search was made, and it ended —in William Dane's finding the well-known bag, empty, tucked behind the chest of drawers in Silas's chamber! William exhorted his friend to confess, and not to hide his sin any longer. Silas turned a look of keen reproach on him, and said, "William, for nine years that we have gone in and out together, have you ever known me tell a lie? But God will clear me."

3. On their return to the vestry they resolved on praying and drawing lots to settle the matter. Silas knelt with his brethren, relying on his own innocence being certified by, immediate divine interference. The lots declared that Silas Marner was guilty. He was solemnly suspended from church membership, and called upon to render up the stolen money: only on confession, as the sign of repentance, could he be received once more within the fold of the church. Marner listened in silence. At last, when every one rose to depart, he went towards William Dane and said, in a voice shaken by agitation—

"The last time I remember using my knife, was when I took it out to cut a strap for you. I don't remember putting it in my pocket again. You stole the money, and you have woven a plot to lay the sin at my door. But you may prosper, for all that: there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent."

There was a general shudder at this blasphemy. William said meekly, "I leave it to our brethren whether this is the voice of Satan or not."

Poor Marner went out with that despair in his soul—that shaken trust in God and man, which is little short of madness to a loving nature. In the bitterness of his wounded spirit, he said to himself, "She will cast me off too." He went home and for a whole day sat alone, stunned by despair. The second day he took refuge from benumbing unbelief, by getting into his loom and working away as usual; and before many hours were past, the minister and one of the deacons came to him with the message from Sarah, that she held her engagement to him at

an end. In little more than month from that time, Sarah was married to William Dane; and not long afterwards it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Marner had departed from the town.

Thus it was that Silas Marner came to Raveloe with a broken faith in man and God. There he sought no one save for the purpose of his calling. He worked unremittingly in his loom; worked far into the night to finish Mrs. Osgood's table linen, without any thought of the money he would receive. He seemed to weave like a spider, from pure impulse, without reflection. But when the table linen was finished he was paid in gold. For the first time in his life he had five bright guineas put into his hand. No man expected a share of them, and he loved no man that he should offer him a share. Marner's palm had known the touch of hard won money even before it had grown to its full breadth. For twenty years mysterious money had stood to him as the symbol of earthy good, and the immediate object of toil. He loved it little in the years when every penny had its purpose; for he loved the purpose then. But now when all purpose was gone, the money came to be the end and object of his weaving.

Gradually the guineas, crowns, and half-crowns which he received grew into a heap; and he handled them and counted them until their form and color were like the satisfaction of a thirst. But it was only at night when his work was done that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. The livelong day he sat in his loom, his ear filled with its monotony, his eye bent close down to the slow growth of sameness in the brownish web. But at night came his revelry. At night he closed his shutters and made fast his door, and drew forth his gold. How the guineas shown as they came pouring out of the dark mouths of the leather bags in which Silas kept them. He spread them out in heaps and bathed his hands in them. He counted them, and set them up in regular piles, and felt their rounded edges between his thumb and fingers; and thought fondly of the guineas that were only half earned by the work of his loom, as if they had been unborn children—thought

fondly of the guineas that were coming slowly through the coming years, through all his life, which spread far away before him, the end hidden in countless days of weaving. But about Christmas in that fifteenth year, a second great change came over Marner's life, and his history became blent in a singular manner with the life of his neighbors.

4. The greatest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house nearly opposite the church. He was only one among several landed parishioners, but he alone was honoured with the title of Squire. The Squire's wife had died long ago, and the Red House was without that presence of the wife and mother which is the foundation of wholesome love and fear in parlour and kitchen. This helped to account for the fact that his sons had turned out rather ill. People shook their heads at the courses of the second son, Dunstan, commonly called Dunsey Cass, whose taste for swapping and betting might turn out to be a sowing of something worse than wild oats. To be sure, the neighbours said, it was no matter what became of Dunsey—a spiteful jeering fellow, who seemed to enjoy his drink the more when other people went dry. But it would be a thousand pities if Mr. Godfrey, the eldest, a fine, open-faced, good-natured young man, should take to going along the same road as his brother, as he had seemed to do of late. If he went on in that way, he would lose Miss Nancy Lammeter; for it was well known that she had looked very shyly on him ever since last Whitsuntide twelvemonth, when there was so much talk about his being away from home days and days together. There was something wrong, more than common—that was quite clear; for Mr. Godfrey didn't look half so fresh-coloured and open as he used to do.

It was the once hopeful Godfrey who was standing, with his hands in his side-pockets and his back to the fire, in the dark wainscoted parlour, one late November afternoon, in that fifteenth year of Silas Marner's life at Raveloe. The fading grey light fell dimly on the walls decorated with guns, whips, and foxes' brushes, on coats and hats flung on the chairs, on

tankards sending forth a scent of flat ale, and on a half-chocked fire, with pipes propped up in the chimney-corners: signs of a domestic life destitute of any hallowing charm, with which the look of gloomy vexation on Godfrey's blonde face was in sad accordance. He seemed to be waiting and listening for someone's approach, and presently the sound of a heavy step was heard across the large empty entrance-hall. The door opened, and a thick-set, heavy-looking young man entered, with the flushed face and the gratuitously elated bearing which mark the first stage of intoxication. It was Dunsey, and at the sight of him Godfrey's face parted with some of its gloom to take on the more active expression of hatred.

"Well, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me? You're my elders and betters, you know; I was obliged to come when you sent for me."

"Why, this is what I want—and just shake yourself sober and listen, will you? I want to tell you, I must hand over that rent of Fowler's to the Squire, or else tell him I gave it you. The Squire's short o' cash and you know what he threatened, if ever he found you making away with his money again. So, see and get the money, and pretty quickly, will you?"

"Oh! Suppose, now, you get the money yourself, and save me the trouble, eh? Since you was so kind as to hand it over to me, you'll not refuse me the kindness to pay it back for me: it was your brotherly love made you do it, you know."

"Don't come near me with that look, else I'll knock you down."

"O no, you won't. Because I'm such a good-natured brother, you know. I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was married to that nice young lady, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But, you see, I don't do it—I'm so easy and good-natured. You'll take any trouble for me. You'll get the hundred pounds for me—I know you will."

"How can I get the money? I haven't a shilling to bless myself with. And it's a lie that you'd slip into my place: you'd get yourself yourself turned out too, that's all."

"Never mind. It 'ud be very pleasant to me to go in your company—you're such a handsome brother, and we've always been so fond of quarrelling with one another, I shouldn't know what to do without you. But you'd like better for us both to stay at home together; I know you would. So you'll manage to get that little sum o' money."

"I tell you, I have no money: I can get no money."

"Borrow of old Kimble."

"I tell you, he won't lend me any more, and I shan't ask him."

"Well then, sell Wildfire."

"Yes, that's easy talking. I must have the money directly."

"Well, you've only got to ride him to the hunt to-morrow. There'll be Bryce and Keating there, for sure. You'll get more bids than one."

"I daresay, and get back home at eight o'clock, splashed up to the chin. I'm going to Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance."

"Oho! And there's sweet Miss Nancy coming; and we shall dance with her, and promise never to be naughty again, and be taken into favour, and—"

"Hold your tongue about Miss Nancy, you fool, else I'll throttle you."

"What for? I'd advise you to creep up her sleeve again: it 'ud be saving time if Molly should happen to take a drop too much laudanum some day, and make a widower of you. Miss Nancy wouldn't mind being a second, if she didn't know it. And you've got a good-natured brother, who'll keep your secret well, because you'll be so very obliging to him."

"I tell you what it is. My patience is pretty near at an end. I may as well tell the Squire everything myself. She's been threatening to come and tell him and she'll do as she threatened some day. It's all one. I'll tell my father everything and you may go to the devil."

"As you please; but I'll have a draught of ale first." And

ringing the bell, he threw himself across two chairs, and began to rap the window-seat with the handle of his whip.

Godfrey stood with his back to the fire, uneasily moving his fingers among the contents of his side-pockets, and looking at the floor. "It's just like you," he burst out, in a bitter tone, "to talk about my selling Wildfire in that cool way; the last thing I've got to call my own, and the best bit of horse-flesh I ever had. It's my belief you'd sell yourself, if it was only for the pleasure of making somebody feel he'd got a bad bargain."

"Ay, ay, you do me justice, I see. You know I'm a jewel for 'ticing people into bargains. For which reason I advise you to let me sell Wildfire. I'd ride him to the hunt tomorrow for you, with pleasure."

"Yes, I daresay—trust my horse to you!"

"As you please. It's you have got to pay Fowler's money; it's none of my business."

When Godfrey spoke again it was in a half-conciliatory tone. "Well, you mean no nonsense about the horse, eh? You'll sell him all fair, and hand over the money? If you don't, everything'll go to smash. I've nothing else to trust to.

"Ay, ay. I thought you'd come round. I'm the fellow to bring old Bryce up to scratch. I'll get you a hundred and twenty for him, if I get you a penny."

"But perhaps it'll rain cats and dogs to-morrow, and then you can't go."

"Not it. I'm always lucky in my weather. It might rain if you wanted to go yourself. You never hold trumps, you know—I always do. You've got the beauty, you see, and I've got the luck, so you must keep me by you for your crooked sixpence; you'll never get along without me."

"Confound you, hold your tongue! And take care to keep sober to-morrow, else you'll get pitched on your head and Wildfire might be the worse for it."

"Make your tender heart easy. You never knew me see double when I'd a bargain to make; it 'ud spoil the fun. Besides, whenever I fall, I'm warranted to fall on my legs."

With that, Dunstan slammed the door behind him, and left Godfrey to that bitter rumination on his personal circumstances which was now unbroken from day to day save by the excitement of sporting, drinking, card-playing, or the rarer pleasure of seeing Miss Nancy Lammeter.

5. The next morning Dunstan Cass setting off for the hunt had to take his way past the stonepit, where stood a cottage, once a stonecutter's shed, now for fifteen years inhabited by Silas Marner. The spot looked very dreary in this November season with the red, muddy water high up in the deserted quarry. That was Dunstan's first thought as he approached it; his second was that the old fool of a miser had a great deal of money hidden somewhere. How was it that he, Dunstan Cass, had never thought of suggesting to Godfrey that he should frighten or persuade the old fellow into lending the money. Dunstan was inclined to turn back and suggest this to Godfrey, but he enjoyed the prospect of selling Wildfire too much to do so.

At the hunt he made a bargain with Bryce for a hundred and twenty, but instead of delivering the horse at once, he rode after hounds, took some impossible leap, and staked and killed the horse. Dunstan was not hurt; and being separated from the others at the time of the accident, he sneaked away on foot towards Raveloe. A heavy mist settled down, and it became dark before he reached the stonepit. He had been thinking about Silas Marner's money, and at sight of a light from the weaver's cottage, he turned up to the door. He knocked loudly to frighten the old fellow, but getting no response he pulled the latch-string vigorously. To his surprise the door opened and he found himself alone in Silas Marner's cottage.

Where was Marner? Suppose he had gone out and had slipped into the stonepit. To whom would his money belong? Almost automatically Dunstan began to look for the money. On the floor beneath the loom he saw a spot where the bricks were covered smoothly with sand. Brushing this away he pried up the bricks and found the leather bags containing Marner's

gold. Taking these into his arms he hurried out of the cottage and into the darkness.

At this moment Silas Marner was not more than a hundred yards away from the cottage, plodding home from the village, his mind at ease. In the cottage everything seemed the same to his short-sighted eye; but when he went to draw out his gold to enjoy its companionship his heart sank within him at sight of the empty hole. He put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a wild ringing scream, the cry of desolation. The money must be found. The thief must be made to bring it back. Silas tottered to the door and opened it. The rain beat in upon him; but without heeding it he hurried out into the night, forgetting to cover his head, not caring to lock his door; hurrying on until he came to the village inn where he startled the men assembled there by his strange appearance and the strange story of his robbery.

6. When Godfrey Cass returned from Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance that night, he was not surprised that Dunsey had not come home. His mind was too full of Nancy Lammeter's looks to give much thought to Wildfire or Dunstan. The next morning the whole village was excited by the story of the robbery, and Godfrey, like every one else, was occupied in discussing it. But as interest in the robbery lagged, Godfrey became more and more uneasy about Wildfire. Dunstan did not return, so Godfrey set off for Batherley to see what had happened. On the way he met Bryce who told him that Wildfire had been staked and killed. Godfrey turned home with a heavy heart, for now he felt that he must tell his father everything. It was with this intention that he fell asleep that night, but the next morning he decided to tell only that part of his secret that related to Fowler's money and Wildfire.

He rose and took his own breakfast earlier than usual, but lingered in the wainscoted parlour till his younger brothers had finished their meal and gone out, awaiting his father. The table had been spread nearly two hours before the Squire presented himself—a tall stout man of sixty. He glanced at his son as

he entered the room, and said, "What, sir! haven't you had your breakfast yet?

"Yes, sir. I've had my breakfast, but I was waiting to speak to you."

"Ah! well, ring the bell for my ale, will you? You youngsters business is your own pleasure, mostly. There's no hurry about it for anybody but yourselves."

Godfrey waited, before he spoke again, until the ale had been brought and the door closed.

"There's been a cursed piece of ill-luck with Wildfire," he began.

"What! broke his knees? I thought you knew how to ride better than that, sir. I never threw a horse down in my life. If I had, I might ha' whistled for another, for my father wasn't so ready to unstring as some fathers I know of. But they must turn over a new leaf—they must. With mortgages and arrears, I'm as short o' cash as a roadside pauper. And there's that damned Fowler. The lying scoundrel told he'd pay me a hundred last month.

"It's worse than breaking the horse's knees—he's been staked and killed. But I wasn't thinking of asking you to buy me another horse: I was only thinking I'd lost the means of paying you with the price of Wildfire, as I'd meant to do. Dunsey took him to the hunt to sell him for me the other day, and after he'd made a bargain for a hundred and twenty with Bryce, he went after the hounds, and took some fool's leap or other, that did for the horse at once. If it hadn't been for that, I should have paid you a hundred pounds this morning."

The Squire had laid down his knife and fork, and was staring at his son in amazement.

"The truth is, sir—I'm very sorry—I was quite to blame. Fowler did pay that hundred pounds. He paid it to me, when I was over there one day last month. And Dunsey bothered me for the money and I let him have it, because I hoped I should be able to pay it you before this."

"You let Dunsey have it, sir? And how long have you been

so thick with Dunsey that you must collogue with him to embezzle my money? Are you turning out a scamp? You let Dunsey have the money? There's some lie at the bottom of it."

"There's no lie, sir. I wouldn't have spent the money myself, but Dunsey bothered me, and I was a fool and let him have it. But I meant to pay it, whether he did or not."

"Where's Dunsey, then? What do you stand talking there for? Go fetch Dunsey, and let him give account of what he wanted the money for, and what he's done with it."

"Dunsey isn't come back, sir."

"What! did he break his own neck then?"

"No, he wasn't hurt, I believe, for the horse was found dead, and Dunsey must have walked off."

"And what must you be letting him have my money for? Answer me that."

"Well, sir, I don't know."

"You don't know? I tell you what it is, sir. You've been up to some trick, and you've been bribing him not to tell."

"Why, sir, it was a little affair between me and Dunsey. It's hardly worth while to pry into young men's fooleries; it wouldn't have made any difference to you, sir, if I'd not had the bad luck to lose Wildfire."

"Fooleries! Pshaw! it's time you'd done with fooleries. You'd need try and help me keep things together."

"Well, sir, I've often offered to take the management of things, but you know you've taken it ill always, and seemed to think I want to push you out of your place."

"I know nothing o' your offering or o' my taking it ill, but I know, one while you seemed to be thinking o' marrying, and I didn't offer to put any obstacles in your way, as some fathers would I'd as lieve you married Lammeter's daughter as anybody. The lass hasn't said downright she won't have you, has she?"

"No, but I dont' think she will."

"Think! why, haven't you the courage to ask her? Do you stick to it, you want to have her?"

"There's no other woman I want to marry."

"Well, then, let me make the offer for you, that's all, if you haven't the pluck to do it yourself. Lammeter isn't likely to be loath for his daughter to marry into my family, I should think."

"I'd rather let it be, please sir, at present. I think she's a little offended with me just now, and I should like to speak for myself. A man must manage these things for himself."

"Well, speak then and manage it, and see if you can't turn over a new leaf. That's what a man must do when he thinks o' marrying."

"I don't see how I can think of it at present, sir. I hope you won't try to hurry it on by saying anything."

"I shall do what I choose, and I shall let you know I'm master. Go out and get that hack o' Dunseys' sold, and hand me the money, will you? He'll keep no more hacks at my expense. And if you know where he's sneaking—I daresay you do—you may tell him to spare himself the journey o' coming back home."

"I don't know where he is, sir; and if I did, it isn't my place to tell him to keep away."

"Confound it, sir, don't stay arguing, but go and order my horse."

Godfrey left the room, hardly knowing whether he were more relieved that the interview was ended without any change in his position, or more uneasy that he had entangled himself still further in prevarication and deceit.

7. The loss of Silas Marner's money aroused the sympathies of some of the people of Raveloe towards this lonely man Among his comforters was Mr. Macey, the old clerk of the parish, who, coming one evening expressly to let Silas know that recent events had given him the advantage of standing more favourably in the opinion of a man whose judgment was not formed lightly, opened the conversation by saying, as soon as he had seated himself and adjusted his thumbs—

"Come, Master Marner, why, you've no call to sit a-moaning. You're a deal better off to ha' lost your money, nor to ha' kep it

by foul means. I used to think, when you first come into these parts, as you were no better nor you should be; you were younger a deal than what you are now; but you were allays a staring, white-faced creatur, partly like a bald-faced calf, as I may say. But there's no knowing: it isn't every queer-looksed thing as Old Harry's had the making of—I mean, speaking o' toads and such; for they're often harmless, like, and useful against varmin. And it's pretty much the same wi' you, as fur as I can see. If Old Harry's a mind to do a bit o' kindness for a holiday, like, who's got anything against it? That's my thinking; and I've been clerk o' this parish forty year. And so, Master Marner, as I was saying—for there's windings i' things as they may carry you to the fur end o' the prayer-book afore you get back to 'em—my advice is, as you keep up your sperrits; for as for thinking you're a deep un, and ha' got more inside you nor'ull bear daylight, I'm not o' that opinion at all, and so I tell the neighbours. For, says I, you talk o' Master Marner making out a tale—why, it's nonsense, that is: it'ud take a 'cute man to make a tale like that; and, says I, he looked as scared as a rabbit."

During this discursive address Silas had continued motionless.

"Come, Master Marner, have you got nothing to say to that?"

"Oh, I thank you—thank you—kindly."

"Ay, ay, to be sure: I thought you would, and my advice is—have you got a Sunday suit?"

"No," said Marner.

"I doubted it was so. Now let me advise you to get a Sunday suit: there's Tookey, he's a poor creatur, but he's got my tailoring business, and some o' my money in it, and he shall make a suit at a low price, and give you trust, and then you can come to church, and be a bit neighbourly. Why you've never heard me say 'Amen' since you come into these parts, and I recommend you to lose no time, for it'll be poor work when Tookey has it all to himself, for I mayn't be equil to stand i' the desk at all, come another winter. And as for the money

for the suit o' clothes, why you get a matter of a pound a-week at your weaving, Master Marner, and you're a young man, eh, for all you look so mushed. Why, you couldn't ha' been five-and-twenty when you come into these parts, eh?"

Silas started a little at the change to a questioning tone, and answered mildly, "I don't know; I can't rightly say—it's a long while since."

After receiving such an answer as this, it is not surprising that Mr. Macey observed, later on in the evening at the Rainbow, that Marner's head was "all of a muddle."

8. Another of Silas's comforters, besides Mr. Macey, was Mrs. Winthrop, the wheel-wright's wife. She was in all respects a woman of scrupulous conscience, so eager for duties, that life seemed to offer them too scantily unless she rose at half-past four in the morning. She was a very mild, patient woman, whose nature it was to seek out all the sadder and more serious elements of life, and pasture her mind upon them. It seemed surprising that Ben Winthrop, who loved his quart-pot of ale and his joke, got along so well with Dolly; but she took her husband's jokes and joviality as patiently as everything else, considering that "men would be so," and viewing the stronger sex in the light of animals whom it had pleased Heaven to make naturally troublesome, like bulls and turkey-cocks.

This good wholesome woman could hardly fail to have her mind drawn strongly towards Silas Marner, now that he appeared in the light of a sufferer; and one Sunday afternoon she took her little boy Aaron with her, and went to call on Silas, carrying in her hand some small lard-cakes, flat paste-like articles, much esteemed in Raveloe. Dolly, as soon as she was seated, removed the white cloth that covered her lard-cakes, and said in her gravest way—

"I'd a baking yisterday, Master Marner, and the lard-cakes turned out better nor common, and I'd ha' asked you to accept some, if you thought well. I don't eat such things myself, for a bit o' bread's what I like from one year's end to the other; but men's stomichs are made so comical, they want a change—

they do, I know, God help 'em. There's letters pricked on 'em. I can't read 'em myself, and there's nobody rightly knows what they mean; but they've a good meaning, for they're the same as is on the pulpit-cloth at church. It's a stamp as has been in our house, Ben says, ever since he was a little un, and his mother used to put it on cakes, and I've allays put it on too; for if there's any good, we've need of it i' this world."

"It's I. H. S.," said Silas.

"Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off. Ben's read 'em to me many and many a time, but they slip out o' my mind again; the more's the pity, for they're good letters, else they wouldn't be in the church; and so I prick 'em on all the loaves and all the cakes, though sometimes they won't hold, because o' the rising—for, as I said, if there's any good to be got we've need of it i' this world—that we have; and I hope they'll bring good to you, Master Marner, for it's wi' that will I brought you the cakes; and you see the letters have held better nor common."

"Thank you—thank you, kindly," said Silas.

"But you didn't hear the church-bells this morning, Master Marner? I doubt you didn't know it was Sunday. Living so lone here, you lose your count, I daresay; and then, when your loom makes a noise, you can't hear the bells, more partic'lar now the frost kills the sound."

"Yes, I did; I heard 'em."

"Dear heart! But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself—if you didn't go to church; for if you'd a roasting bit, it might be as you couldn't leave it, being a lone man. But now, upo' Christmas-day, this blessed Christmas as is ever coming, if you was to take your dinner to the bakehus, and go to church, and see the holly and the yew, and hear the anthim, and then take the sacramen', you'd be a deal the better, and you'd know which end you stood on, for if you've niver had no church, there's no telling the good it'll do you. For I feel so set up and comfortable as niver was, when I've been and heard the prayers, and the singing to the praise and glory o' God—and Mr. Crackenthorp saying good words, and more partic'lar on Sacramen' Day; and if a bit o' trouble

comes, I feel as I can put up wit' it, for I've looked for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we'n done our part, it isn't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Theirn." Poor Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology fell rather unmeaningly on Silas's ears. Notwithstanding her honest persuasions Silas spent his Christmas-day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart. He sat in his robbed home through the livelong evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was grey.

9. But in Raveloe village the bells rang merrily, and the church was fuller than all through the rest of the year. At Squire Cass's family party that day nobody mentioned Dunstan—nobody was sorry for his absence, or feared it would be too long.

The party on Christmas-day, being a strictly family party, was not the pre-eminently brilliant celebration of the season at the Red House. It was the great dance on New Year's Eve that made the glory of Squire Cass's hospitality. At this occasion the Red House was provisioned as if for a siege; and spare feather-beds ready to be laid on floors, they were as plentiful as might naturally be expected in a family that had killed its own geese for many generations.

Some women, I grant, would not appear to advantage seated on a pillion, and attired in a drab joseph and a drab beaver-bonnet, with a crown resembling a small stew-pan. It was all the greater triumph to Miss Nancy Lammeter's beauty that she looked thoroughly bewitching in that costume, as seated on the pillion behind her tall erect father, she held one arm around him. The bloom on her cheeks was at its height when she arrived at the door of the Red House, and saw Mr. Godfrey Cass ready to lift her from the pillion. It was quite painful, when you had made it quite clear to a young man that you were determined not to marry him, that he would still continue to pay you marked attentions; besides, why didn't he always show

the same attentions, if he meant them sincerely, instead of being so strange as Mr. Godfrey Cass was, sometimes behaving as if he didn't want to speak to her, and taking no notice of her for weeks and weeks, and then, all of a sudden, almost making love again. All these thoughts rushed through Miss Nancy's mind, while she was being lifted from the pillion by strong arms, which seemed to find her ridiculously small and light.

There was a buzz of voices through the house, as Miss Nancy entered. Mrs. Kimble, who did the honours at the Red House on these great occasions, came forward to meet her in the hall, and conduct her up-stairs. Mrs. Kimble was the Squire's sister, as well as the doctor's wife—a double dignity, with which her diameter was in direct proportion; so that a journey up-stairs being rather fatiguing to her, she did not oppose Miss Nancy's request to be allowed to find her way alone to the Blue Room, where the Miss Lammeter's bandboxes had been deposited on their arrival in the morning.

Miss Nancy, as she entered the Blue Room, had to make her little formal curtsy to a group of six. There were ladies no less important than the two Miss Gunns, the wine merchant's daughters from Lytherly, dressed in the height of fashion, with the tightest skirts and the shortest waists. Miss Nancy had no sooner made her curtsy than an elderly lady came forward. She approached Miss Nancy with much primness, and said, with a slow, treble suavity—

"Niece, I hope to see you well in health." Miss Nancy kissed her aunt's cheek dutifully and answered, with the same sort of amiable primness, "Quite well, I thank you, aunt, and I hope to see you the same."

"Thank you, niece, I keep my health for the present."

Then Miss Nancy was formally introduced to her aunt's visitors, the Miss Gunns now for the first time induced to make a journey in these parts; and these ladies were so taken by surprise at finding such a lovely face and figure in an out-of-the-way country place, that they began to feel some curiosity about the dress she would put on when she took off her joseph. Three of the ladies quickly retired, but the Miss Gunns were quite

content that Mrs. Osgood's inclination to remain with her niece gave them also a reason for staying to see the rustic beauty's toilette. And it was really a pleasure—from the first opening of the bandbox, where everything smelt of lavender and rose-leaves, to the clasping of the small coral necklace that fitted closely around her little white neck. It is true that her light-brown hair was cropped behind like a boy's, and was dressed in front in a number of flat rings, that lay quite away from her face; but there was no sort of coiffure that could make Miss Nancy's cheek and neck look otherwise than pretty; and when at last she stood complete in her silvery twilled silk, her lace tucker, her coral necklace, and coral ear-drops, the Miss Gunns could see nothing to criticise except her hands, which bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work.

10. The anxiety about sister Priscilla, which had grown rather active by the time the coral necklace was clasped, was happily ended by the entrance of that cheerful-looking lady herself, with a face made blowsy by cold and damp. After the first questions and greetings, she turned to Nancy, and surveyed her from head to foot; then wheeled her round, to ascertain that the back view was equally faultless.

"What do you think o' these gowns, aunt Osgood?" said Priscilla while Nancy helped her to unrobe.

"Very handsome indeed, niece," said Mrs. Osgood, with a slight increase of formality. She always thought niece Priscilla too rough.

"I'm obliged to have the same as Nancy, you know, for all I'm five years older and it makes me look yallow; for she never will have anything without I have mine just like it, because she wants us to look like sisters. And I tell her folks 'ull think it's my weakness makes me fancy as I shall look pretty in what she looks pretty in. For I am ugly—there's no denying that: I feature my father's family. But, law! I don't mind, do you?" Priscilla here turned to the Miss Gunns, rattling on in too much

preoccupation with the delight of talking, to notice that her candour was not appreciated.

The delicate process of getting her narrow gown over her head without injury to her smooth curls, obliged Miss Priscilla to pause in this rapid survey of life, and Mrs. Osgood seized the opportunity of rising and saying:

"Well, niece, you'll follow us. The Miss Gunns will like to go down."

"Sister," said Nancy, when they were alone, "you've offended the Miss Gunns, I'm sure."

"What have I done, child?"

"Why, you asked them if they minded about being ugly; you're so very blunt."

"Law, did I? Well, it popped out: it's a mercy I said no more, for I'm a bad un to live with folks when they don't like the truth. But as for being ugly, look at me, child, in this silver-colored silk—I told you how it 'ud be—I look as yallow as a daffadil. Anybody 'ud say you wanted to make a mawkin of me."

"No, Priscy, don't say so. I begged and prayed of you not to let us have this silk if you'd like another better. I was willing to have your choice, you know I was."

"Nonsense, child, you know you'd set your heart on this; and reason good, for you're the colour o' cream. It 'ud be fine doings for you to dress yourself to suit my skin."

"Priscy," said Nancy, gently, as she fastened a coral necklace, exactly like her own, round Priscilla's neck, which was very far from being like her own, "I'm sure I'm willing to give way as far as is right, but who shouldn't dress alike if it isn't sisters?"

"There you go again! You'd come round to the same thing if one talked to you from Saturday night till Saturday morning. It'll be fine fun to see how you'll master your husband and never raise your voice above the singing o' the kettle all the while. I like to see the men mastered!"

"Don't talk *so,* Priscy," said Nancy, blushing. "You know I don't mean ever to be married."

"O, you never mean a fiddlestick's end!" said Priscilla, as she arranged her discarded dress, and closed her bandbox. "Come, we can go down now. I'm as ready as a mawkin can be—there's nothing awaiting to frighten the crows, now I've got my ear-droppers in."

11. Places of honour had been kept for the Miss Lammeters near the head of the principal tea-table in the wainscoted parlour. Nancy felt an inward flutter when she saw Mr. Godfrey Cass advancing to lead her to a seat between himself and Mr. Crackenthorp, while Priscilla was called to the opposite side between her father and the Squire. It was not the rector's practice to let a charming blush pass without an appropriate compliment. "Ha, Miss Nancy," he said, turning his head within his cravat, and smiling down pleasantly upon her, "when anybody pretends this has been a severe winter, I shall tell them I saw the roses blooming on New Year's eve; eh, Godfrey, what do you say?"

Godfrey made no reply, and avoided looking at Nancy. The Squire was rather impatient at Godfrey's showing himself a dull spark in this way. "Ay, ay," he began, "us old fellows may wish ourselves young tonight, when we see the mistletoe-bough in the White Parlour. It's true, most things are gone back'ard in these last thirty years. But when I look at Miss Nancy here, I begin to think the lasses keep up their quality; ding me if I remember a sample to match her."

"Miss Nancy's wonderful like what her mother was, though; isn't she, Kimble?" said the stout lady of that name, looking round for her husband. But Doctor Kimble being a thin and agile man, was flitting about the room with his hands in his pockets, making himself agreeable to his feminine patients, with medical impartiality.

"Did you speak to me, my dear?" he said, coming quickly to his wife's side; but, as if foreseeing that she would be too much out of breath to repeat her remark, he went on immediately—"Ha, Miss Priscilla, the sight of you revives the taste of that super-excellent pork pie. I hope the batch isn't near an end."

"Yes, indeed, it is, doctor," said Priscilla; "but I'll answer for it the next shall be as good. My pork-pies don't turn out well by chance."

"Not as your doctoring does, eh, Kimble?—because folks forget to take your physic, eh?" said the Squire.

"Ah, she has a quick wit, my friend Priscilla has," said the doctor, choosing to attribute the epigram to a lady rather than allow a brother-in-law that advantage over him. "She saves a little pepper to sprinkle over her talk—that's the reason why she never puts too much into her pies. Ha, Miss Nancy," he continued, suddenly skipping to Nancy's side, "you won't forget your promise? You're to save a dance for me, you know."

"Come, come, Kimble, don't you be too for'ard," said the Squire. "Give the young uns fair-play. There's my son Godfrey'll be wanting to have a round with you if you run off with Miss Nancy. He's bespoke her for the first dance, I'll be bound. Eh, sir! what do you say? Haven't you asked Miss Nancy to open the dance with you?"

Godfrey, sorely uncomfortable under this significant insistance about Nancy said with as little awkwardness as possible:—

"No; I've not asked her yet, but I hope she'll consent—if somebody else hasn't been before me."

"No, I've not engaged myself," said Nancy.

"Then I hope you've no objections to dancing with me."

"No, no objections."

"Ah, well, you're a lucky fellow, Godfrey," said Uncle Kimble; "but you're my godson, so I won't stand in your way."

While safe, well-tested personalities were enlivening the tea in this way, the sound of the fiddle made the young people look at each other with sympathetic impatience for the end of the meal.

"Why, there's Solomon in the hall," said the Squire, "and playing my fav'rite tune."

At this there was a sound of chairs pushed back, and laughing voices. Solomon, holding his white head on one side, and

playing vigorously, marched forward at the head of the gay procession into the White Parlour, where the mistletoe-bough was hung, and multitudinous tallow candles made rather a brilliant effect, gleaming from among the berried holly-boughs, and reflected in the old-fashioned oval mirrors fastened in the panels of the white wainscot.

12. Already, Mr. Macey and a few other privileged villagers, who were allowed to be spectators on these great occasions, were seated on benches placed for them near the door. The Squire led off with Mrs. Crackenthorp, joining hands with the Rector and Mrs. Osgood.

"The Squire's pretty springe, considering his weight," said Mr. Macey, "and he stamps uncommon well. But Mr. Lammeter beats 'em all for shapes; he's got a fine leg. The parson's nimble enough, but he hasn't got much of a leg: it's a bit too thick down'ard, and his knees might be a bit nearer wi'out damage; but he might do worse, he might do worse. Though he hasn't that grand way o' waving his hand as the Squire has."

"Hey, by jingo," said Ben Winthrop, "there's the young Squire leading off now, wi' Miss Nancy for partners! There's a lass for you! like a pink-and-white posy—there's nobody 'ud think as anybody could be so pritty. I shouldn't wonder if she's Madam Cass some day, arter all—and nobody more rightfuller, for they'd make a fine match. Master Godfrey doesn't look so down-hearted to-night. And I see he's for taking her away to sit down, now that they're at the end o' the dance: that looks like sweethearting, that does."

The reason why Godfrey and Nancy had left the dance was not so tender as Ben imagined. In the close press of couples, a slight accident had happened to Nancy's dress. No reason less urgent than this could have prevailed on Nancy to give Godfrey this opportunity of sitting apart with her. She seated herself on a chair against one of the card-tables, as the stiffest and most unapproachable position she could choose.

"Thank you, sir," she said immediately. "I needn't give

you any more trouble. I'm sorry you've had such an unlucky partner."

"That's very ill-natured of you," said Godfrey, standing by her without any sign of intended departure, "to be sorry you've danced with me."

"Oh, no, sir, I don't mean to say what's ill-natured at all," said Nancy, looking distractingly prim and pretty. "When gentlemen have so many pleasures, one dance can matter but very little."

"You know that isn't true. You know one dance with you matters more to me than all the other pleasures in the world."

It was a long, long while since Godfrey had said anything so direct as that.

"No, indeed, Mr. Godfrey, that's not known to me, and I have very good reasons for thinking different. But if it's true, I don't wish to hear it."

"Would you never forgive me, then, Nancy; never think well of me, let what would happen; would you never think the present made amends for the past? Not if I turned a good fellow, and gave up everything you didn't like?"

"I should be glad to see a good change in anybody, Mr. Godfrey, but it 'ud be better if no change was wanted."

"You're very hard-hearted, Nancy," said Godfrey, pettishly. "You might encourage me to be a better fellow. I'm very miserable—but you've no feeling."

"I think those have the least feeling that act wrong to begin with," said Nancy, sending out a flash in spite of herself. Godfrey was delighted with that little flash, and would have liked to go on and make her quarrel with him; Nancy was so exasperatingly quiet and firm.

But the entrance of Priscilla, bustling forward and saying, "Dear heart alive, child, let us look at this gown," cut off Godfrey's hope of a quarrel.

"I suppose I must go now," he said to Priscilla.

"It's no matter to me whether you go or stay," said that frank lady.

"Do you want me to go?" said Godfrey, looking at Nancy.

"As you like," said Nancy looking down carefully at the hem of her gown.

"Then I like to stay," said Godfrey, with a reckless determination to get as much of this joy as he could to-night, and think nothing of the morrow, and the danger of Dunstan's return or the graver danger of a visit to Raveloe by his wife.

13. But while Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms. This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew, and her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding her existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife.

She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall. She had waited longer than she knew, and now that she found herself belated in the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes, even the animation of a vindictive purpose could not keep her spirit from failing. She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter—the familiar demon opium which she carried in her bosom; but she hesitated a moment, after drawing out the black remnant, before she raised it to her lips. In that moment the mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion—pleaded to be left in aching weariness, rather than to have the encircling arms benumbed so that they could not feel the dear burden. In another moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant—it was an empty vial. She walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there came now and then

the light of a quickly-veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Slowly the demon opium was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtained off all futurity—the longing to lie down and sleep. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms had not relaxed their instinctive clutch; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

But the complete torpor came at last: the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "mammy," and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground. In an instant the child had slipped on all-fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thorougly warmed the old sack spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire. Presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

14. But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark, Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest. This morning he had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe-way of jesting with the old miser, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Since the on-coming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, only to shut it immediately at seeing all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while—there was really something on the road coming towards him then, but he caught no sign of it; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair. He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it—but he did not close it: he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss, by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and he stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, powerless to resist either the good or evil that might enter there.

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light had grown dim, and that he was chilled and faint. Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it

seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! His heart beat violently as he stretched out his hand to grasp the restored treasure: but instead of the hard coin his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement he fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died. Was it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child. It was very much like his little sister.

There was a cry on the hearth: the child had awakened, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with "mammy." Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little. He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one. Presently she began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her; but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes.

But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow. He raised her in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was a cry of "mammy." Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed

their track to the furze bushes. "Mammy!" the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than bush before him; that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

15. It was after the early supper-time at the Red House, and the entertainment was in that stage when bashfulness itself had passed into easy jollity. Bob Cass was figuring in a hornpipe, and his father, very proud of this lithe son was the centre of a group who had placed themselves opposite the performer, not far from the upper door. Godfrey was standing a little way off, not to admire his brother's dancing, but to keep sight of Nancy, who was seated in the group, near her father. He had the prospect of dancing with her again when the hornpipe was concluded, and in the meantime it was very pleasant to get long glances at her quite unobserved. But when Godfrey was lifting his eyes from one of those long glances, they encountered an object as startling to him at that moment as if it had been an apparition from the dead. It was his own child, in Silas Marner's arms. The Squire had risen, and asked angrily, "How's this?—what's this?—what do you do coming in here in this way?"

"I'm come for the doctor—I want the doctor."

"Why, what's the matter, Marner?" said Mr. Crackenthorp, the rector. "The doctor's here; but say quietly what you want him for."

"It's a woman," said Silas just as Godfrey came up. "She's dead, I think; dead in the snow at the Stone-pits not far from my door."

Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at that moment: it was, that the woman might not be dead. That was an evil terror—an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition; but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.

"Hush, hush!" said Mr. Crackenthorp. "Go out into the hall there. I'll fetch the doctor to you. Found a woman in the snow. Better say as little about it as possible: it will shock the ladies. I'll go and fetch Kimble."

But the ladies had pressed forward.

"What child is it?" said Nancy Lammeter, addressing Godfrey.

"I don't know; some poor woman's who has been found in the snow, I believe," was the answer Godfrey wrung from himself with a terrible effort.

"Why, you'd better leave the child here, then, Master Marner," said good-natured Mrs. Kimble.

"No, no, I can't part with it, I can't let it go. It's come to me; I've a right to keep it."

"Did you ever hear the like?" said Mrs. Kimble. But Dr. Kimble had come in from the card room.

"Now, ladies, I must trouble you to stand aside," he said. "Let somebody run to Winthrop's and fetch Dolly; she's the best woman to get."

"I'll go," said Godfrey, eager for some movement; "I'll go and fetch the woman, Mrs. Winthrop."

"O, pooh—send somebody else," said Uncle Kimble, hurrying away with Marner.

"You'll let me know if I can be of any use, Kimble," said Mr. Crackenthorp. But the doctor was out of hearing.

Godfrey, too, had disappeared: he was gone to snatch his hat and coat, having reflection enough to remember that he must not look like a madman; but he rushed out of the house into the snow without heeding his thin shoes; and in a few minutes was on his way to the Stone-pits by the side of Dolly.

"You'd a deal better go back, sir," said Dolly, with respectful compassion. "You've no call to catch cold."

"No, I'll stay, now I'm once out; I'll stay outside here," said Godfrey.

"Well, sir, you're very good: you've a tender heart," said Dolly, going to the door.

Godfrey was too painfully preoccupied to feel a twinge of self-reproach at this undeserved praise. He walked up and down, unconscious that he was plunging ankle-deep in snow, unconscious of everything but trembling suspense about what was going on in the cottage. He never knew how long it was before the door opened and Dr. Kimble came out.

"I waited for you, as I'd gone so far."

"Pooh, it was nonsense for you to come out: There's nothing to be done. She's dead—has been dead for hours, I should say."

"What sort of woman is she?"

"A young woman, but emaciated, with long black hair. Some vagrant—quite in rags. She's got a wedding ring on, however. They must fetch her away to the workhouse to-morrow. Come, come along."

"I want to look at her. I think I saw such a woman yesterday."

Dr. Kimble went on, and Godfrey turned back to the cottage. He cast only one glance at the dead face on the pillow, which Dolly had smoothed with decent care; but he remembered that last look at his unhappy hated wife so well, that at the end of sixteen years every line in the worn face was present to him when he told the full story of this night.

He turned immediately towards the hearth where Silas Marner sat lulling the child. The wide-open blue eyes looked up at Godfrey's without any uneasiness or sign of recognition: and the father felt a strange mixture of regret and joy, that the pulse of that little heart had no response for the half-jealous yearning in his own.

"You'll take the child to the parish to-morrow?"

"Who says so? Will they make me take her?"

"Why, you wouldn't like to keep her, should you—an old bachelor like you?"

"Till anybody shows they've a right to take her away from me. The mother's dead, and I reckon it's got no father: it's a lone thing—and I'm a lone thing. My money's gone, I don't

know where—and this is come from I don't know where. I know nothing—I'm partly mazed."

"Poor little thing! Let me give something towards finding it clothes."

He had put his hand in his pocket and found half-a-guinea, and, thrusting it into Silas's hand, he hurried out of the cottage to overtake Dr. Kimble.

There was a pauper's burial that week in Raveloe, and at Batherly in was known that the dark-haired woman with the fair child, who had lately come to lodge there, was gone away again. That was all the express note taken that Molly had disappeared from the eyes of men. But the unwept death which, to the general lot, seemed as trivial as the summer-shed leaf, was charged with the force of destiny to certain human lives that we know of, shaping their joys and sorrows even to the end.

16. Silas Marner's determination to keep the "tramp's child" was matter of hardly less surprise in the village than the robbery of his money. That softening of feeling towards him which dated from his misfortune was now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women, who knew what it was to be interrupted in folding their arms and scratching their elbows by the mischievous propensities of children just firm on their legs. Among these, Dolly Winthrop was the one whose neighbourly offices were the most acceptable to Marner. Silas had shown her the half-guinea given to him by Godfrey, and had asked her what he should do about getting some clothes for the child.

"Eh, Master Marner," said Dolly, "there's no call to buy, no more nor a pair o' shoes; for I've got the little petticoats as Aaron wore five years ago, and it's ill spending the money on them baby-clothes, for the child'ull grow like grass i' May, bless it—that it will."

And the same day Dolly brought her bundle, and displayed to Marner, one by one, the tiny garments in their due order of succession. This was the introduction to a great ceremony with

soap and water, from which baby came out in new beauty, and sat on Dolly's knee, chuckling and patting her palms.

"Anybody 'ud think the angils in heaven couldn't be prettier," said Dolly, rubbing the golden curls and kissing them. "And to think of its being covered wi' them dirty rags—and the poor mother—froze to death; but there's Them as took care of it, and brought it to your door, Master Marner. The door was open and it walked in over the snow, like as if it had been a little starved robin. Didn't you say the door was open?"

"Yes. Yes—the door was open. The money's gone I don't know where, and this is come from I don't know where."

"Ah, it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest—one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where. We may strive and scrat and fend, but it's little we can do arter all—the big things come and go wi' no striving o' our'n—and I think you're in the right on it to keep the little un, Master Marner, though there's folks as thinks different. You'll be a bit moithered with it while it's so little; but I'll come and see to the child for you, and welcome."

"Thank you . . . . kindly. But I want to do things for it myself, else it may get fond o' somebody else, and not fond o' me. I can learn, I can learn."

"Eh, to be sure. I've seen men as are wonderful handy wi' children. The men are awk'ard and contrairy mostly, God help 'em—but when the drink's out of 'em, they aren't unsensible, though they're bad for leeching and bandaging; so fiery and unpatient. You see this goes first, next the skin," said Dolly, taking up the little shirt, and putting it on.

"Yes," said Marner, bringing his eyes very close, that they might be initiated in the mysteries; whereupon Baby seized his head with both her small arms, and put her lips against his face with purring noises.

"See there," said Dolly, with a woman's tender tact, "she's fondest o' you. She wants to go o' your lap, I'll be bound. Go, then: take her, Master Marner; you can put the things on, and

then you can say as you've done for her from the first of her coming to you."

Marner took the child on his lap, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. He took the garments from Dolly, and put them on under her teaching; interrupted, of course, by Baby's gymnastics.

"There, then! why, you take to it quite easy, Master Marner," said Dolly; "but what shall you do when you're forced to sit in your loom? For she'll get busier and mischievouser every day—she will, bless her. It's lucky as you've got that high hearth i'stead of a grate, for that keeps the fire more out of her reach."

"I'll tie her to the leg o' the loom, tie her with a good long strip o' something."

"Well, mayhap that'll do, as it's a little gell, for they're easier persuaded to sit i' one place nor the lads. I know what the lads are; for I've had four—four I've had, God knows—and if you was to take and tie 'em up, they'd make a fighting and a crying as if you was ringing pigs. If it wasn't a sin to the lads to wish 'em made different, I should ha' been glad for one of 'em to be a little gell; and to think as I could ha' taught her to scour, and mend, and the knitting, and everything. But I can teach 'em this little un, Master Marner, when she gets old enough."

"But she'll be my little un. She'll be nobody else's."

"No, to be sure; you'll have a right to her if you're a father to her, and bring her up according. But you must bring her up like christened folks's children, and take her to church, and let her learn her catechise, as my little Aaron can say off—the 'I believe,' and everything, and 'hurt nobody by word or deed'—as well as if he was the clerk. And it's my belief as the poor little creatur has never been christened, and it's nothing but right as the parson should be spoke to. For if the child ever went anyways wrong, and you hadn't done your part by it, Master Marner—'noculation, and everything to save it from harm—it'ud be a thorn i' your bed for ever o' this side the grave; and I can't

think as it 'ud be easy lying down for anybody when they'd got to another world, if they hadn't done their part by the helpless children as come wi'out their own asking."

"What is it as you mean by 'christened?' Won't folks be good to her without it?"

"Dear, dear! Master Marner. Had you never no father nor mother as taught you to say your prayers, and as there's good words and good things to keep us from harm?"

"Yes, I know a good deal about that—used to, used to. But I want to do everything as can be done for the child. And whatever's right and you think 'ull do it good, I'll act according.

"Well, then, Master Marner. I'll ask Mr. Macey to speak to the parson about it; and you must fix on a name for it, because it must has a name giv' it when it's christened."

"My mother's name was Hephzibah, and my little sister was named after her."

"Eh, that's a hard name. I partly think it isn't a christened name."

"It's a bible name."

"Then I've no call to speak again' it. But is was awk'ard calling your little sister by such a hard name, when you'd got nothing big to say, like; wasn't it, Master Marner?"

"We called her Eppie."

"Well, if it was noways wrong to shorten the name, it'ud be a deal handier. And so I'll go now, Master Marner, and I wish you the best o' luck, and it's my belief as it'll come to you, if you do what's right by the orphin child."

17. Baby was christened and on this occasion, Silas, making himself as clean and tidy as he could, appeared for the first time within the church, and shared in the observances held sacred by his neighbours. As the weeks grew to months, the child created fresh and fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrunk continually into narrower isolation. Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude, Eppie was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and liv-

ing sounds, and living movements. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web; but Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday. And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits, to where the flowers grew.

Eppie was reared without punishment. The stone hut was made a soft nest for her, lined with downy patience. Notwithstanding the difficulty of carrying her and his yarn or linen at the same time, Silas took her with him in most of his journeys and little curly-headed Eppie, the weaver's child, became an object of interest at several out-lying homesteads, as well as in the village. Everywhere he must sit a little and talk about the child. No one was afraid of him now: there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world.

In old days there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction. We see no white-winged angels now. But yet men are led away from threatening destruction; a hand is put into theirs, which leads them forth gently towards a calm and bright land, so that they look no more backward; and the hand may be a little child's.

18. It was a bright autumn Sunday, sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peel which told that the morning service was ended; and out of the arched doorway in the tower came the parishioners. Foremost among these are some whom we shall recognise, in spite of Time, who has laid his hand on them all. The tall blond man of forty is not much changed in feature from the Godfrey Cass of six-and-twenty. The pretty woman who is leaning on his arm, is more

changed than her husband: for the bloom that used to be always on Nancy's cheek now comes but fitfully. It is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, but in everything else one sees signs of a frame much enfeebled by the lapse of the sixteen years. But there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side—a blonde dimpled girl of eighteen, who has vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her brown bonnet. Eppie cannot help being rather vexed about her hair, for she thinks hair ought to be smooth; but that good-looking fellow, Aaron Winthrop, who walks behind her, doesn't want Eppie's hair to be different.

"I wish we had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's," said Eppie, when they were out in the lane; "only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging and bringing fresh soil—and you couldn't do that, could you, father?"

"Yes, I could do it, child if you want a bit o' garden: these long evenings, I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you."

"I can dig it for you, Master Marner," said Aaron Winthrop, who was now by Eppie's side. It'll be play to me after I've done my day's work."

"Eh, Aaron, my lad, are you there? I wasn't aware of you; for when Eppie's talking o' things, I see nothing but what she's a-saying. Well, if you could help me with the digging, we might get her a bit o' garden all the sooner."

"Then, if you think well and good, I'll come to the Stonepits this afternoon, and we'll settle what land's to be taken in, and I'll get up an hour earlier i' the morning, and begin on it."

"But not if you don't promise me not to work at the hard digging, father," said Eppie. "For I shouldn't ha' said anything about it, only Mrs. Winthrop said as Aaron 'ud be so good, and—"

"And you might ha' known it Eppie without Mother telling you. And Master Marner knows too, I hope, as I'm able and willing to do a turn o' work for him."

"It'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-pits when we've got some flowers, for I always think the flowers can see us and know what we're talking about. And I'll have a bit o' rosemary, and bergamot, and thyme, because they're so sweet-smelling; but there's no lavender only in the gentlefolks' gardens, I think."

"That's no reason why you shouldn't have some, Eppie. I can bring you slips of anything. There's a big bed o' lavender at the Red House."

"Well, so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red House: for Mr. Cass's been so good to us, and built us up the new end o' the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I couldn't abide to be imposin' for garden-stuff."

"No, no, there's no imposin', there's never a garden in all the parish but what there's endless waste in it for want o' somebody as could use everything up. It's what I think to myself sometimes, as there need nobody run short o' victuals if the land was made the most on, and there was never a morsel but what could find its way to a mouth. But I must go back now, else mother'ull be in trouble as I aren't there."

19. Aaron turned back up the village, while Silas and Eppie went on up the lonely sheltered lane.

"O, daddy! My little old daddy! I'm so glad. I don't think I shall want anything else when we've got a little garden; and I knew Aaron would dig it for us. I knew that very well."

"You're a deep little puss, you are, but you'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron."

"Oh, no, I shan't, he likes it."

Now that she was grown up, Silas had often been led, in those moments of quiet outpouring which come to people who live together in perfect love, to talk with her of the past. It would have been impossible for him to hide from Eppie that she was not his own child. She had long known how her mother had died on the snowy ground, and how she herself had been found on the hearth by father Silas. She had again and again asked Silas to tell her how her mother looked, whom she was

like, and how he had found her against the fruze bush. The furze bush was there still; and this afternoon, when Eppie came out with Silas into the sunshine, it was the first object that arrested her eyes and thoughts.

"Father," she said, in a tone of gentle gravity, "we shall take the furze bush into the garden; it's come into the corner, and just against it I'll put snowdrops and crocuses, 'cause Aaron says they won't die out, but 'll always get more and more."

"Ah, child, it wouldn't do to leave out the furze bush; and there's nothing prettier, to my thinking, when it's yallow with flowers. But it's come into my head what we're to do for a fence, for a fence we must have, else the donkeys and things 'ull come and trample everything down."

"O, I'll tell you, daddy. There's lots o' loose stones about, and we might lay 'em atop of one another, and make a wall. You and me could carry the smallest, and Aaron 'ud carry the rest—I know he would."

"Eh, my precious 'un, wi' your little arms you couldn't carry a stone no bigger than a turnip."

"Oh, I'm stronger than you think, daddy," said Eppie, skipping forward to the pit. But she started back in surprise.

"O, father, just come and look here, come and see how the water's gone down since yesterday."

"Well, to be sure. That's the draining they've begun on, since harvest."

"How odd it'll seem to have the old pit dried up," said Eppie, turning away, and stopping to lift rather a large stone. "See, daddy, I can carry this quite well," she said, going along for a few steps, and then letting it fall.

"Ah, you're fine and strong, arn't you? Come, come, let us go and sit down on the bank against the stile there, and have no more lifting. You might hurt yourself child. You'd need have somebody to work for you—and my arm isn't over strong."

Silas uttered the last sentence slowly, as if it implied more than met the ear; and Eppie, when they sat down on the bank,

nestled close to his side, and, taking hold caressingly of the arm that was not over strong, held it on her lap.

"Father," said Eppie, very gently, after they had been sitting in silence a little while, "if I was to be married, ought I to be married with my mother's ring?"

"Why, Eppie, have you been a-thinking on it?"

"Only this last week, father, since Aaron talked to me about it."

"And what did he say?"

"He said he would like to be married, because he was a-going in four-and-twenty, and had got a deal of gardening work. He goes twice a-week to Mr. Cass's, and once to Mr. Osgood's, and they're going to take him on at the Rectory."

"And who is it as he's wanting to marry?"

"Why, me, to be sure, daddy, as if he'd want to marry anybody else!"

"And you mean to have him, do you?"

"Yes, some time, I don't know when. Everybody's married some time, Aaron says. But I told him that wasn't true: for, I said, look at father—he's never been married."

"No, child, your father was a lone man till you was sent to him."

"But you'll never be lone again, father. That was what Aaron said—'I could never think o' taking you away from Master Marner, Eppie. And I said, 'It 'ud be no use if you did, Aaron.' And he wants us all to live together, so as you needn't work a bit, father, only what's for your own pleasure; and he'd be as good as a son to you—that was what he said."

"And should you like that, Eppie?"

"I shouldn't mind it, father. I should like things to be so as you needn't work much. But if it wasn't for that, I'd sooner things didn't change. I like Aaron to be fond of me, and come and see us, often, and behave pretty to you—he always does behave pretty to you, doesn't he, father?"

"Yes, child, nobody could behave better."

"But I don't want any change. I should like to go on a long, long, while, just as we are. Only Aaron does want a change;

and he made me cry a bit—only a bit—because he said I didn't care for him, for if I cared for him I should want us to be married, as he did."

"Eh, my blessed child, you're o'er young to be married. We'll ask Mrs. Winthrop—we'll ask Aaron's mother: if there's a right thing to do, she'll come at it. But there's this to be thought on, Eppie: things will change, whether we like it or not; things won't go on for a long while just as they are and no difference. I shall get older and helplesser, and be a burden on you, belike, if I don't go away from you altogether. Not as I mean you'd think me a burden; I know you wouldn't, but it 'ud be hard upon you; and when I look for'ard to that, I like to think as you'd have somebody else besides me, somebody young and strong, as'll outlast your own life, and take care on you to the end."

"Then, would you like me to be married, father?"

"I'll not be the man to say no, Eppie, but we'll ask your god-mother. She'll wish the right thing by you and her son too."

"There they come. Let us go and meet 'em."

20. It was Godfrey's custom on a Sunday afternoon to do a little contemplative farming in a leasurely walk. Nancy seldom accompanied him. She usually sat with Mant's Bible before her, and after following the text with her eyes for a little while, she would gradually permit them to wander as her thoughts had already insisted on wandering. There was one main thread of painful experience in Nancy's married life. It was that they had no children. Her one little baby had died, and she had apposed Godfrey's wish to adopt a child. From the first Godfrey had specified Eppie. On this Sunday afternoon it was already four years since there had been any allusion to the subject between them, and Nancy supposed that it was forever buried.

"I wonder if he'll mind it less or more as he gets older," she thought; "I'm afraid more. Aged people feel the miss of

children. And if I die, Godfrey will be very lonely. But I won't be over-anxious: I must do my best for the present."

With that last thought Nancy was surprised by the appearance of the servant with the tea-things.

"Is your master come into the yard, Jane?"

"No'm, he isn't. I don't know whether you've seem 'em, 'm, but there's folks making haste all one way, afore the front window. I hope nobody's hurt, that's all."

"O, no, I daresay there's nothing much the matter. It's perhaps Mr. Snell's bull got out again."

"I wish he mayn't gore anybody, that's all," said Jane, going out.

"That girl is always terrifying me," thought Nancy; "I wish Godfrey would come in." Some one opened the door at the other end of the room, and Nancy felt that it was her husband. She turned from the window with gladness in her eyes.

"Dear, I'm so thankful you're come. I began to get. . . . ."

She paused abruptly, for Godfrey was laying down his hat with trembling hands, and turned towards her with a pale face and a strange unanswering glance.

"Sit down, Nancy—there. I came back as soon as I could, to hinder anybody's telling you but me. I've had a great shock —but I care most about the shock it'll be to you."

"It isn't father and Priscilla?"

"No, it's nobody living. It's Dunstan—my brother Dunstan, that we lost sight of sixteen years ago. We've found him—found his body—his skeleton. The Stone-pit has gone dry suddenly —from the draining, I suppose; and there he lies—has lain for sixteen years, wedged between two great stones. There's his watch and seals, and there's my gold-handled hunting-whip."

"Do you think he drowned himself?"

"No, he fell in. Dunstan was the man that robbed Silas Marner."

"O Godfrey!"

"There was the money in the pit—all the weaver's money. Everything's been gathered up, and they're taking the skeleton to the Rainbow. I came back to tell you: there was no hinder-

ing it; you must know. Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep it from you no longer. Nancy, when I married you, I hid something from you—something I ought to have told you. The woman Marner found dead in the snow—Eppie's mother—that wretched woman—was my wife: Eppie is my child."

He dreaded the effect of his confession. But Nancy sat quite still, only that her eyes dropped and ceased to meet his.

"You'll never think the same of me again. I oughtn't to have left the child unowned: I oughtn't to have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her; I suffered for it."

Still Nancy was silent, looking down; and he almost expected that she would presently get up and say she would go to her father's. But at last she lifted up her eyes to his and spoke. There was no indignation in her voice, only deep regret.

"Godfrey, if you had but told me this six years ago, we could have done some of our duty by the child. Do you think I'd have refused to take her in, if I'd known she was yours? And, O Godfrey, if we'd had her from the first, if you'd taken to her as you ought, she'd have loved me for her mother, and you'd have been happier with me: I could better have born my little baby dying, and our life might have been more like what we used to think it 'ud be."

"But you wouldn't have married me then, Nancy, if I'd told you. With your pride and your father's, you'd have hated having anything to do with me after the talk there'd have been."

"I can't say what I should have done about that, Godfrey. I should never have married anybody else. But I wasn't worth doing wrong for; nothing is in this world. Nothing is so good as it seems beforehand; not even our marrying wasn't, you see."

"I'm a worse man than you thought I was, Nancy. Can you forgive me ever?"

"The wrong to me is but little, Godfrey: you've made it up to me; you've been good to me for fifteen years. It's another

you did the wrong to; and I doubt it can never be all made up for."

"But we can take Eppie now. I won't mind the world knowing at last."

"It'll be different coming to us, now she's grown up. But it's your duty to acknowledge her and provide for her.

"Then we'll go together to Silas Marner's this very night, as soon as everything's quiet at the Stone-pits."

21. Between eight and nine o'clock that evening, Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold; the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

"At first, I'd a sort o' feeling come across me now and then, as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it come back. But that didn't last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again, if it had drove you from me, for I'd got to feel the need o' your looks and your voice and the touch o' your little fingers. You didn't know then, Eppie, when you were such a little un, you didn't know what your old father Silas felt for you."

"But I know now, father. If it hadn't been for you, they'd have taken me to the workhouse, and there'd have been nobody to love me."

"Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you hadn't been sent to save me, I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it's been kept—kept till it was wanted for you. It's wonderful; our life is wonderful." There was a knocking at the door; and Eppie was obliged to rise without answering Silas. Beautiful she looked, with the tenderness of gathering tears in her eyes and a slight flush on her cheeks, as she stepped to

open the door. The flush deepened when she saw Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass.

"We're disturbing you very late, my dear," said Mrs. Cass, taking Eppie's hand, and looking in her face with an expression of anxious interest and admiration.

Eppie, after placing chairs for Mr. and Mrs. Cass, went to stand by the side of Silas.

"Well, Marner," said Godfrey, trying to speak with perfect firmness, "it's a great comfort to me to see you with your money again. It was one of my family did you the wrong and I feel bound to make up to you for it in every way. But there are other things I'm beholden—shall be beholden to you for, Marner."

"Sir, I've a deal to thank you for a'ready. As for the robbery, I count it no loss to me. And if I did, you couldn't help it! You aren't answerable for it."

"You may look at it in that way, Marner, but I never can; and I hope you'll let me act according to my own feeling of what's just. You've done a good part by Eppie, Marner, for sixteen years. It 'ud be a great comfort to you to see her well provided for, wouldn't it? To see her taken care of by those who can leave her well off, and make a lady of her."

"I don't take your meaning, sir."

"Well, my meaning is this, Marner. Mrs. Cass and I, you know have no children—nobody to benefit by our good house and everything else we have. And we should like to have somebody in the place of a daughter to us—we should like to have Eppie and treat her in every way as our own child. It would be a great comfort to you in your old age, I hope, to see her fortune made in that way. Eppie, I'm sure, will always love you and come and see you very often, and we should all be on the lookout to do everything we could towards making you comfortable."

For some moments Silas was powerless under a conflict of emotions. "Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in you way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass."

"Thank you, ma'am; thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady; thank you all the same. I couldn't give up the folks I've been used to."

Eppie's lip began to tremble and the tears were in Nancy's eyes. Godfrey felt an irritation inevitable to almost all of us when we encounter an unexpected obstacle.

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie: the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child. She is my own child; her mother was my wife. I have a natural claim on her that must stand before every other."

Eppie had given a violent start, and turned quite pale. Silas on the contrary felt the spirit of resistance in him set free. "Then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen year ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine; you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."

"I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I've repented of my conduct in that matter."

"I am glad to hear it, sir, but repentance doesn't alter what's been going on for fifteen year. Your coming now and saying, 'I'm her father,' doesn't alter the feelings inside us. It's me she's been calling her father ever since she could say the word."

"But I think you might look at the thing more reasonably, Marner. It isn't as if she was to be taken quite away from you, so that you'd never see her again. She'll be very near you, and come to see you very often. She'll feel just the same towards you."

"Just the same? How'll she feel just the same for me as she does now, when we eat o' the same bit, and drink o' the same cup, and think o' the same things from one day's end to another?"

"I should have thought, Marner, I should have thought your affection for Eppie would have made you rejoice in what was for her good, even if it did call upon you to give up something. You're putting yourself in the way of her welfare.

Silas was again stricken in conscience, lest he should be raising his own will as an obstacle to Eppie's good. For many moments he was mute. When he spoke his words came tremulously.

"I'll say no more. Speak to the child. I'll hinder nothing."

"Eppie, my dear," said Godfrey, "it'll always be our wish that you should show your love and gratitude to one who's been a father to you so many years. But we hope you'll come to love us as well; and though I haven't been what a father should have been to you all these years, I wish to do the utmost in my power for you for the rest of my life and you'll have the best of mothers in my wife."

"My dear, you'll be a treasure to me. We shall want for nothing when we have our daughter."

Eppie held Silas's hand in hers, and grasped it firmly.

"Thank you, ma'am, thank you, sir, but I should have no delight i' life any more if I was forced to go away from my father, and knew he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling lone. He's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me."

Godfrey looked up at Nancy with a flushed face and smarting eyes.

"Let us go," he said, in an undertone.

"We won't talk of this any longer now," said Nancy, rising. "We're your well-wishers, my dear; and yours too, Marner. We shall come and see you again. It's getting late now."

In this way she covered her husband's abrupt departure, for Godfrey had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

22. They walked home under the starlight in silence. When they entered the oaken parlour, Godfrey threw himself into his chair and said—"That's ended!"

"Yes, I'm afraid we must give up the hope of having her for a daughter. We can't alter her bringing up and what's come of it."

"No," there's debts we can't pay like money debts. While I've been putting off and putting off, the trees have been growing—it's too late now. I must do what I can to make her happy in her own way. But I got you, Nancy, in spite of all; and yet I've been grumbling and uneasy because I hadn't something else—as if I deserved it."

"You've never been wanting to me, Godfrey. My only trouble would be gone if you resigned yourself to the lot that's been given us."

"Well, perhaps it isn't too late to mend a bit there. Though it is too late to mend some things, say what they will."

There was one time of the year which was held in Raveloe to be especially suitable for a wedding. It was when the great lilacs in the old-fashioned gardens showed their purple wealth above the lichen-tinted walls. The sunshine fell more warmly than usual on the lilac tufts the morning that Eppie was married. Seen at a little distance as she walked across the churchyard and down the village, she seemed to be attired in pure white, and her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas. Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband; and there ended the little bridal procession.

There were many eyes to look at it, and Miss Priscilla Lammeter was glad that she and her father had happened to drive up to the door of the Red House just in time to see this pretty sight. They had come to keep Nancy company to-day, because Mr. Cass had had to go away for special reasons.

"I could ha' wished Nancy had had the luck to find a child like that and bring her up," said Priscilla to her father, as they sat in the gig; "I should ha' had something young to think of then, besides the lambs and the calves."

"Yes, my dear, yes," said Mr. Lammeter; "one feels that as one gets older. Things look dim to old folks: they'd need have

some young eyes about 'em, to let 'em know the world's the same as it used to be.

Nancy came out now to welcome her father and sister; and the wedding group passed on beyond the Red House to the humbler part of the village.

At the Stone-pits Eppie had a larger garden than she had ever expected, and in other ways there had been alterations at the expense of Mr. Cass. The garden was fenced with stones on two sides, but in front there was an open fence, through which the flowers shone with answering gladness, as the wedding party came within sight of them.

"O father," said Eppie, "what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are."

MAUD

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

WHEN TENNYSON'S "Maud" was first given to the public it was severely condemned by some of its readers. It was said that the spelling of the title must be wrong; that the *u* or the *a* should have been omitted, for the proper name of the poem was either "Mad" or "Mud." This condemnation, however, turned to praise as the poem came to be understood. It is interesting to know that the great statesman-premier William E. Gladstone publicly recanted his adverse criticism after he had heard Tennyson read portions of "Maud." This is not surprising, however, for "Maud" is rich with some of the finest lyric poetry in the English language. Yet "Maud" is not easy for the unwarned and unaided reader to understand. "Maud" is not a simple complete story, or a play with characters: it is a succession of isolated lyrics, spoken by one speaker, to himself, and under different circumstances and widely different moods; spoken merely to relieve the mind of the speaker, and without direct intention to tell others the secrets of his life. These lyrics from the life of the speaker in "Maud," like the fragments of a fine old vase, must be pieced together and restored before the life history of the speaker is clear and complete. But when the life history of the speaker in "Maud" is clear and complete, the average reader will like this group of poems.

At the opening of this monodrama, as Tennyson called it, we have as the sole speaker a young man twenty-five years old. He lives alone with two servants in a rambling house at the edge of a little wood, where, as he says, "He can hear the dead at midday moan." This house and wood is all that remains of his father's estate. He has lived here alone for ten years or more, ever since his father and his mother died. From his doorway he can look up to the old manorial hall where Maud was born and lived as a child; now for many years unused by its owner, Maud's father. After a short walk and the climb of a little hill he can come in sight of a village and of the sea. Another very short walk through the wood will bring him to a hollow with precipitous ledges at the foot of which the body of his father was found.

When this young man was a boy his father and Maud's father were neighbors and friends. On the advise of Maud's father this man's father had invested in a speculative venture which had made Maud's father rich and this man's father poor. This broke the friendship of the two families. This man's father blamed Maud's father. He said bitter things against Maud's father, and against business cheats and liars. He grew morose and despondent; and one wild October night he went out from his home, and his dead body was brought back mangled and crushed. He had fallen, or been thrown, over the ledge into the hollow behind the wood. Soon after this his wife, suffering from the shock, and "vexed with lawyers and harassed by debt," died, and her young son was left alone. He was fifteen or sixteen years old at this time; and the memories of his father's troubles and his mother's worries rested heavily in his sensitive mind. Without friends or sympathetic associates he grew up bitter in soul. At twenty-five we find him hating his environment and its memories; "sick, sick to the heart of life"; "a wounded thing with a rancorous cry."

Maud's father, soon after the speculative venture, and the feud that followed it, had made him doubly rich and doubly poor, took his family, consisting of his wife, his son, and Maud, and went to London, Paris, Rome, and other large cities; living here and there but never returning during this period of ten years to live at the old manorial hall. Maud's mother died abroad grieving over the feud that had separated these old families. At the opening of this monodrama the speaker has not seen Maud or her family for many years, yet in spite of his bitterness towards her father he remembers what a lovely lively child Maud was.

One early spring day, while the chill of winter was still in the air, and the new growth of the new year's life had not yet started, we find this young man, now in the twenty-fifth year of his life, walking in the open near his home. He is returning from the wood and from the dreadful hollow where the body of his father was found, and his mind is vivid with old memories; so vivid that he stops in his walk and speaks to himself, saying:

1. I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
   Its lips in the field above are dappled with blood-red heath,
   The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
   And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."

   For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
   His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—

Mangled, and flatten'd and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

I remember the time,[1] for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divided the shuddering night.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he;[2] his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearth-stone?

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine.[3]
When only the ledger[4] lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

[1] When his father's body was dragged into the house at night.
[2] My father.
[3] The poor in England were once put together regardless of age or sex.
[4] Business was everything.

And the vitriol madness flashes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,[5]
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,[6]
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,
And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits[7]
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.[8]

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,[9]
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thones.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and
the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

2. Instead of finding relief from his environment and its memories by running away from the place and the pit and the fear, he finds a new force in that environment that changes its meaning. He comes in contact with the redeeming power of love. He has heard that the old manorial hall is to be put back in shape for the return of Maud's family; and as he lifts his eyes towards the hill where the hall stands he sees that the workmen are already busy. He begins to recall again his memories of Maud the child; and by this very act the bitterness of his mind is sweetened.

[5] Criminal assault.
[6] Adulteration of food.
[7] Burglar's brace and bit.
[8] Poisoned drugs.
[9] Children sacrificed for money and industry.

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,[10]
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced[11] darling of all,—

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor:[12] she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

In spite of his intention to bury himself in himself, and to have nothing to do with Maud, when he sees her drive by in her carriage, the perfect beauty of her face fascinates him even though he thinks it is cold.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
Icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,

[10] His father held a bunch of grapes up before Maud's eager mouth.
[11] Round-faced.
[12] Richer lovers to win.

From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

That night when he tries to sleep, Maud's face grows and fades and grows in his mind until he gets up and goes out doors into the chill dim moonlight long before dawn. He recalls this vivid experience.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead.[13]

As the weeks pass by and the buds begin to show their green, we find this young man sitting in a little grove overlooking the village and the sea. It is a beautiful, balmy day, and far-off sails are half lost in the haze of the sea. It is a day when the human spirit should be at peace; but old bitterness of mind is hard to sweeten.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;

[13] This return of killing post is like a symbol of the speaker's grief to come.

And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,[14]
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.
We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame'
However we brave[15] it out, we men are a little breed.

The drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization he ruled with rod or with knout?[16]
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

[14] The shrike impales its victims on thorns.
[15] In spite of our pretended superiority we are often worse than beasts.
[16] Knouts were whips with many lashes used by Russian soldiers.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The h[illegible]ney of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

3. It is a bright May morning, and the speaker in this poem is walking in the fields near the Hall when he hears a clear sweet song. It is Maud. She is standing by the great cedar tree on the wide sloping lawn that stretches away from the Hall.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,

Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

Silence, beautiful voice![17]
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

One evening when the speaker is in the village, and the splendor of the sunset glows on the blossoming fruit trees trained against the ends of the houses, he meets Maud; and she touches his hand with such a warmth of simple friendliness that he feels that dark days and storm can never come to him again. But the next morning as he stands at his window he sees the clouds storm-tossed, and the newly-budded trees torn by the wind. His own mind, though storm-tossed, knows that a smile can make sweet the bitterness of life.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends[18]
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,

[17] He tries to resist yet loves to hear.
[18] Fruit trees were trained against the ends of houses.

She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,

Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
But that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled.
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

4. His growing interest in Maud awakens in him a very dim memory of his childhood at the time Maud was born. At that time Maud's father and the speaker's father were very happy together in the thought that some day Maud and the speaker would grow up to be man and wife.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
"Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
"Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be."

He recalls the time he saw Maud alone at the village church.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangly blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
"No surely, now it cannot be pride."

He recalls the time he saw Maud riding with her brother and the newly-made lord who comes as a guest to the hall.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile

Betwixt the cloud and the moor
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,[19]
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark

With no more hope of light.
Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks
The slavish[20] hat from the villager's head?
What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth, that is ever agape—[21]
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

Last week came one to the country town,
To preach our poor little army down,

[19] The whole picture, or a part of it, was, for a moment, lighted by the setting sun.

[20] The poor behave like slaves to the rich and titled.

[21] Pale, open-mouthed, and foolish looking.

This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealously, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy[22]
For a man and leader of men.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

5. As time goes by the speaker feels that if he can just have the experience of a moment of perfect love he will be satisfied with life in spite of all things that may come to him.

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet

[22] The new lord.

Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

As time goes by he has his day more and more fully. He and Maud gather the wild lilies in the wood where the happy birds sing; while the crows caw, and the new lord looks in vain for Maud at the Hall.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favour!

O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden.
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,[23]
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

But the happiness of his day is marred by the scorn of Maud's proud brother.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.[24]

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there

[23] Even the dog does not like the lord.
[24] His perfumery and jewelry are offensive.

To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

6. Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;

But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
    And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one else,
    Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if *I* be dear to some one else,
    Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

Shall I not take care of all that I think, yea even of wretched meat and drink, if I be dear, if I be dear to someone else. The supreme test of human love is its power to make life unselfish; supremely thoughtful for the loved ones.

Maud's brother decides to go to London for a week of pleasure. Maud and her lover can now meet with greater freedom; and the lover feels that the time has now come when he must ask Maud to be his own. It is at the close of a beautiful day in June, and he is waiting for her to come down to him from the Hall.

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,

He may stay for a year who has gone for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

As he sees her close at hand his heart beats fast.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

When he has asked her to be his own, and is waiting for her reply, there flashes through his mind, like a bit of ecstatic music, the desire that the day may pause a moment in its course until it can carry to the whole world the joy that Maud's yes will bring.

Go not, happy day,
    From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
    Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
    Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
    And a rose her mouth
When the happy Yes
    Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
    Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
    Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
    Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
    By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
    Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
    Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
    Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
    And a rose her mouth.

Tennyson, unlike the modern movie, does not try to describe for us the sacred experience that follows Maud's happy yes. We know that her cheeks and her mouth are rosy, and that is enough. It is nearly midnight when she returns to the Hall. Her lover goes with her. When the door is closed he lingers near, lying beneath the great cedar tree, somehow expecting her to come once more. His love, like a great river close to the sea, is deep, irresistible, and calm. It is interesting to know that Tennyson liked best of all to read this portion of "Maud" aloud for others.

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on,
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.
None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' patterning talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none,
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon[25]
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame:

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,[26]
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand

[25] Lebanon is the great land of cedars, yet this cedar has become beautiful here where Maud lives.

[26] He watches the stars through the swaying branches of the cedar.

A sad astrology,[27] the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf[28] have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.
Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."[29]
Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours[30] that past in bridal white,

[27] A knowledge of astronomy and of the vastness of space makes man seem very small.

[28] Life is like a stormy gulf.

[29] He imagines that Maud would say that thoughts of death makes love greater.

[30] Midnight.

And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe[31]
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

8. Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.
My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings

[31] Forces of woe within him not understood.

I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within!

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;

And this was what had redden'd her cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
Kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will!

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I fell I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
O then, what then shall I say?—
If ever I should forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

9. Soon after Maud's brother returns from London he sends out invitations to a grand dinner and a dance at the Hall. Maud's lover is not invited, but he and Maud plan to meet in Maud's rose garden when the dance is over.

But to-morrow if we live,
Our Ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey[32] will hover,
And the titmouse[33] hope to win her

[32] [33] The powerful suitors and the little ones.

With his chirrup at her ear.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.
For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's[34] pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

On the afternoon before the dance, as the lover is walking by the little stream that runs down from the Hall across his land towards the sea, he finds a red rose in a little whirlpool in the stream. It is a symbol of Maud's promise to meet him.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee

[34] Maud's brother.

(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odour and colour, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

That night he waits among the roses until the break of dawn and the dance is over. His patient eagerness to see Maud makes him sensitive to every sign of beauty; and as the time for her to come draws near his ecstatic expectancy breaks into expression.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the Garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,[35]
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half[36] to the setting moon are gone,

[35] Venus as the morning star.
[36] Of the guests.

And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and onto the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;

Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

10. From the heights of his ecstatic expectancy the lover is plunged into the depths of maddening horror and grief. Maud has hardly reached his side when her brother, flushed with wine and followed by the silly lord, runs to them, calls Maud names, insults her lover, strikes him in the face. In an hour a duel is fought; and as Maud's brother lies wounded, he tells her lover to fly. Filled with terror and followed by the scream of Maud as she comes upon the scene, the lover runs up the hill, until exhausted and stunned he finds himself sitting on the ground unconsciously picking the wild flowers about him.

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine"—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it that has been done?

O dawn of Eden[37] bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
"The fault was mine," he whispered, "fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

Is it gone?[38] my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.

[37] This day, with the coming of Maud, promised to be as the Garden of Eden; the day of great happiness.

[38] He has seen an apparition of Maud.

It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

After a brief meeting with Maud in which she promises to love him still, he flees to the coast of France. There on the sands of the seashore he notices a tiny dead shell, in which he seems to find a sympathetic symbol of his own life.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,

Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine[39]
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.[40]
For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,

[39] Break a big ship in two.
[40] His song is a song of lamentation.

However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

Again, the supreme test of love is its totally unselfish eagerness for the welfare of the loved one.

11. The extreme grief of love is the grief that comes from the death of the loved one. When this lover hears that Maud is dead his grief finds but few words.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou are left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why.
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

After a long period of suffering, grief assuages itself in pleasing memories mixed with madness and the shadowy presence of a cold phantom of Maud.

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain

To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us,
What and where they be.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,

And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That will show itself without.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,

It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

12. Grief, and loneliness among strange faces, at last break the mind of this man, and make him temporarily insane. Shut up in some foreign prison or asylum he imagines that he is dead and buried just beneath the surface of a busy city street.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,

With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;

For what will the old man say?
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

We do not know how long he remained in this broken-minded condition, but we find him at last recovered and returned to England. There he finds a new interest in life by joining his countrymen in a war in defense of the right.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro's cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,"
And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a clear delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I

(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

IDYLLS OF THE KING

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON

CONDENSED FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

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OUT OF THE DIM TRADITIONS and histories of early England Alfred Tennyson has woven for us, in twelve long narrative poems, the "Idylls of the King." These idyls are the story of King Arthur and the knights of his Round Table. As we read these idyls today the human hopes and heartaches of Arthur and Guinevere, of Lancelot and Elaine, and of all that goodly company of their time, seem very clear and near to us. We seem once to have lived with them, to have shared in their experiences, and to have known for ourselves the very truth of the things that Tennyson tells about in these "Idylls of the King."

At times as we read these stories we feel the heart-beat of the aspirations of all men. Again as we read we are moved to deep tenderness towards human life, and even to tears. "Tears from the depth of some divine despair rise in the heart and gather to the eyes in looking on" this life that once was rich with human hope and is now no more. When we see Queen Guinevere in the holy house at Almesbury, shame-stricken, prone upon the floor before the King, her sad face hidden "with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair," we, like King Arthur, long to lift her, like a weeping child, into our arms, and bless her cares away. We feel a pure and divine pity for her suffering soul. Again, when we see King Arthur after that "last dim weird battle of the west," all his knights slain except Sir Bedivere, only "the wan wave braking in among dead faces, to and fro swaying the helpless hands, and up and down tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen," our hearts ache with a somber sorrow that comes to all who are left companionless in a lost cause. Still again, when we see Arthur "so deeply smitten through the helm that without

help he cannot last till morn," half rise upon one arm and in great pain, and looking "wistfully with wide blue eyes as in a picture," we, like Sir Bedivere, "remorsely regard him through our tears" and can say nothing. The tears of a deep, divine despair arise within as we understand through the "grevious wound" of King Arthur that the great aspirations and wistful hungers of each king-like human soul must some day "pass to where beyond these voices there is peace."

If one goes to the southwest of England today, to the little and ancient town of Glastonbury, and stands among the sky-roofed ruins of the old abbey, he will be on ground where King Arthur and Queen Guinevere once stood, and where their ashes have slept for fifteen hundred years. Here Lancelot and the bold Sir Bedivere, and others of that "glorious company, the flower of men" whom Arthur drew together in the knighthood of the Table Round, once came and went. Here, too, at the foot of the great hill of Glastonbury, that ancient Isle of Avalon, five hundred years before King Arthur's time, came Joseph of Arimathea, as the first Christian missionary to England; bringing with him the Holy Grail, "the cup from which our Lord drank at the last sad supper with his own."

That King Arthur, and Queen Guinevere, and the Knights of the Round Table once lived and loved and labored for the light no one can doubt. Down through the mists of long years, half history, half tradition, comes the story of these people. It is the age-old story of human aspirations shattered by human frailties. King Arthur, touched with the spark of noble ideals, built up his social and political order for good, only to see it crumble through the infidelity of wife and friend, and through the weaknesses and jealousies of men.

It seems to be man's highest nature to aspire to the goodness and benevolence of God in the use of life's powers for the good of others, but it is often his sorrow to see the institutions he builds up and uses for good break down under their own weight or through the un-god-like actions of others. King Arthur, like men in all ages, faced life with large powers and high hopes. His desire and pleasure lay in redressing human wrongs and in making the world a better place to live in. His great human heart looked on Guinevere and loved her deeply. He felt that were he joined with her the two "reigning with one will in everything might have power in this dark land to lighten it, and power on this dead world to make it live." But when human Guinevere was Arthur's wife she "yearned for warmth and color which she found in Lancelot;" and finding this, she spoilt the purpose of King Arthur's life. The sorrow that came to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere is the sorrow that comes to all aspiring men

The god in man must fail because man is not God. But this natural sorrow that comes from aspirations that must fail has this of comfort in it: when life is lived to the best of its powers, in the light of its god-like aspirations, what it has done or failed to do for good has not been done in vain. Though "the old order changes yielding place to new," still "God fulfills himself in many ways." The good men strive for and try to fix, yet fail to fix in full, is good still, even when the little kingdoms that they build are overthrown.

In condensing these "Idylls of the King" for oral interpretation only four of them will be used. These deal with the life closest of the King. In the first, "The Coming of Arthur," the many traditions concerning Arthur's mysterious birth, and his struggles for power among the petty kings and heathen hoards are omitted. Just the simple story of Arthur's love and hope are suggested.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

1. Leodogran, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and bear
Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.

And King Leodogran heard of Arthur newly crown'd
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help us thou!
For here between the man and beast we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on.
And passing thence to battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode "Her father said
That there between the man and beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
For saving I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my work
Wholly, but were I join'd with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make live."

Then from the foughten field he sent
To King Leodogran,
Saying, "If I in aught have served thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."
And King Leodogran rejoiced.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth
And bring the Queen;—and watch'd him from the gates:
And Lancelot past away among the flowers,
(For then was latter April) and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King

That morn was married, while in stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,
The Sun of May descended on their King,
And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
"King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
"Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfill the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
The trumpets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King:—

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world—Let the King reign.

Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battleaxe and flash brand! Let the King reign.

Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

The King will follow Christ, and we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign."

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

As the years of Arthur's reign passed by Sir Lancelot was known as the greatest knight in Arthur's realm, both in open battle and on the tilting field. He was the favorite of the king, and the darling of the court. He was gracious to all ladies, especially to Guinevere. From the first time he and Guinevere had met they had loved each other. The trustful king did not suspect. The knights did not suspect. This love unhindered and unfrightened grew. Lancelot became the most loyal and disloyal of all of Arthur's knights. When Lancelot chanced to see Elaine,—the sweetest lily in King Arthur's land, "the great and sinful love he bore the queen" kept him from loving her, even though "Elaine loved him with a love that was her doom."

There is no sweeter, sadder picture of the pangs of disprized love than is the picture of Elaine. Her life, much like Ophelia's, is too tender to survive the bitterness of love.

1. ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,

Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
And he, that once was king, had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
Saying, "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these."
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen,
When all were won.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began:
"To blame, my lod Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!"
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,

Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a King who honours his own word,
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,

If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
Will then allow your pretext."

2. Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.

Thither he made, found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not:

Then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name?"

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat, "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.

And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have.
But Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
"Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will;
This maid might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth."

The lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marred his face and marked it ere his time.
Marred as he was, he seemed the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall.
However marred, of more than twice her years,
Seamed with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Into that rude hall stept with all grace,
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.

When they had retired for the night, Elaine could not forget him.

All night long his face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to Sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favour of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those, who know me know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you."

And he turned
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my child.

Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him "A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me."
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away.

She stay'd a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

3. Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself

In the white rock a chapel and a hall
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?
The great Lancelot, One,
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
He will be there."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold; and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
The hard earth shake.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger:
King, duke, earl,
Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot.

A fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North sea,
Down on a bark,
So they overbore Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' this side, and there snapt, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried, "Advance and take thy prize
The diamond"; but he answer'd, "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lancehead:"
"Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."

But he, "I die already with it: draw—
Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

4. But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King,
"He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore, rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
Take this diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

And, after two days' tarriance there, the King return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why that like was he."
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,

But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and his most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the unhearing wall,

Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Reported who he was, and on what quest
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
And there he set himself to play upon her
With graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, "Prince,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on?"

"Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:
"Our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!"

Then he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sir, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous, truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
So ran the tale like fire about the court.
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

5. But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
"Father you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
I pray you." Then her father nodding said,
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,

"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"

Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How knew ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods left them,
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.

And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes

Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King:"
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kissed her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you,
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."

What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colours on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more;
But did not love the colour; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd sleep until he slept.

6. Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave: so day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him.
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,

Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers;
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister, answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love—to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine:
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done."
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self:
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More especially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied:
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remain'd, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

7. So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone;
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,

Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

Back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yesternight

I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all."

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame."

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders: never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,

Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear Lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said—"ye never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death

Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

8. But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows,
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw

One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, or Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: but my Queen,
I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumours be."

While thus he spoke, half-turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!

For her! for your new fancy.
Add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her she shines me down:
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain,
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?

For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

9. While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless man
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames wept,
Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order to their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb."

When now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,

Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."

And Lancelot went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself, "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
Farewell, fair lily. Jealousy in love?
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray Him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."
So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain.

GUINEVERE

Sin, they say, must sooner or later come to light. Queen Guinevere and Lancelot could not keep their love for each other a secret forever. Wily and jealous eyes in Arthur's court would spy the secret out. The evil day of reckoning came at last.

1. Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice: one low light betwixt them burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne, and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round.

It chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court
The wiliest and the worst; and more than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way.
Ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,

As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries
"I shudder, some one steps across my grave;"
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers
Would be forevermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,
To save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
Held her awake: or if she slept, she dream'd
An awful dream; for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—
When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane.

And at last she said,
"O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again, some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
Before the people, and our lord the King."
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."
And then they were agreed upon a night
(When the good King should not be there) to meet
And part forever. Vivien, lurking, heard.
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met
And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye.
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought
His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony; and crying with full voice
"Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last," aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,
And all was still.

Then she, "The end is come,
And I am shamed for ever;" and he said,
"Mine be the shame; mine was the sin; but rise,
And fly to my strong castle overseas:
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the world."
She answer'd, "Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!
Mine is the shame, yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom."

2. So Lancelot got her horse,
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd and parted weeping: for he past,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan:
And in herself she moan'd, "Too late, too late!"

And when she came to Almesbury she spake
There to the nuns, and said, "Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time
To tell you:" and her beauty, grace and power,
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns;
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,
But communed only with the little maid,
Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness
Which often lured her from herself; but now,
This night, a rumour wildly blown about
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm,
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King
Was waging war on Lancelot: then she thought,
"With what a hate the people and the King
Must hate me," and bow'd down upon her hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering, "Late! so late!
What hour, I wonder, now?" and when she drew

No answer, by and by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her, "Late, so late!"
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,
"O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that do we repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.

Then said the little novice prattling to her,
"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words, the words of one so small,
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is he

To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done."

3. Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
"Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?"
But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, there
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
"Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?"
But openly she spake and said to her,
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously,
"Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So glad were spirits and men."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
"Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,

Spirits and men: could none of them foresee,
What has fall'n upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again,
"Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
As wellnigh more than man,
For there was no man knew from whence he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,
There came a day as still as heaven, and then
They found a naked child upon the sands
And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him
Till he by miracle was approven King:
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the world.
But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,
But that they stay'd him up; nor would he tell
His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen, "Lo! they have set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me," and bow'd her head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue,
Full often, "and, sweet lady, if I seem
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales

Which my good father told me, check me too
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest;
But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her,
"Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forebore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forebore his own advantage, and these two
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:
"O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,
"Such as thou art be never maiden more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
And traitress." When that storm of anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, "Get thee hence,"
Fled frighted.

4. Then that other left alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself, "The simple, fearful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.
For what is true repentance but in thought—
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:
And I have sworn never to see him more.
To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight, the goodliest man,
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure (for the time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd),
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By courtiers gone before.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,
"Not like my Lancelot,"—while she brooded thus
And drew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry, "The King." She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from her seat she fell,

And grovell'd with her face against the floor:
There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from the King:
And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed, the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,
The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
And knowest thou now from whence I come—from him,
From waging bitter war with him: and he,
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the King
Who made him knight: but many a knight was slain;
And many more, and all his kith and kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
And of this remnant will I leave a part,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my death.
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.

5. "I was first of all the kings who drew
The Knighthood-errant of this realm and all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of men.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear

To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
And all this throve before I wedded thee,
Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy.'
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot.

Think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!

Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands upon his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death
(When first I learnt thee hidden here), is past.
The pang—which while I weigh'd thy heart with one
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn—is also past— in part.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd and I,
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
I cannot take thy hand: that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope.

"Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against the man they call
My sister's son—no kin of mine,
—and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
But thither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more—
Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

6. Then listening till those armed steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
The casement: "peradventure," so she thought,
"If I might see his face, and not be seen."
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.

And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
So she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's.
And even then he turn'd; and more and more
The moony vapour rolling round the King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray
And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud
"O Arthur!" there her voice brake suddenly,
Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Fails in mid-air, but gathering at the base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—
Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone—my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.

I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him, and left me hope

That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God. Ah, great and gentle lord,
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the height
To which I would not or I could not climb—
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air
That pure severity of perfect light—
I yearn'd for warmth and colour which I found
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot nor another.

Is there none will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none:
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest:
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she look'd and saw
The holy nuns all round her, weeping; and said,
"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'shame.'
I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

They took her to themselves; and she
Still hoping, fearing, "is it yet too late?"
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

1. On their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:

Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death;
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight."
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd,
"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise—
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights

Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

2. Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:
"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King,
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred unharm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King:
"King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,

And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken cancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of sublest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
I charge thee, quickly go again, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

3. Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.
So might some old man speak in the aftertime."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard."

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

4. Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
That this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow.
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn

Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but—if he come no more—
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

THE RING AND THE BOOK

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

CONDENSED FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

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THE RING AND THE BOOK is Robert Browning's poetic interpretation of an old Roman murder case, in which a fifty-three-year-old husband and his accomplices are tried for the murder of a seventeen-year-old wife and her foster parents. The husband was Count Guido Franceschini; the wife was Pompilia Comparini; the foster parents were Pietro and Violante Comparini. The murder took place in Rome on the night of January 2, 1698. Pietro and Violante were killed on the spot, but Pompilia, in spite of twenty-two dagger wounds, lived four days and told her story. Guido had married her for her parents' money when she was but thirteen years old. He had taken her to his native town, Arezzo. There her life for three years was so miserable that at last she fled to her parents in Rome, aided by a young priest of Arezzo, named Giuseppe Caponsacchi. Guido followed fast and caught them before they reached Rome. He had them arrested. Caponsacchi as a priest took the case to Rome. He and Pompilia were judged guilty. He was relegated for three years to Civita near Rome. She was sent to a Sisterhood. Guido returned to Arezzo. This was in the summer of 1697. On December 20 of that year Pompilia's babe was born. Ten days later came the murder.

Building on the bare facts of this murder case, Browning creates an inner-life experience for several persons concerned or interested in the case. In the following condensations we have the testimonies before the court of three persons most concerned.

COUNT GUIDO FRANCESCHINI

Count Guido Franceschini is before the Roman court of judges. He has just been brought in from the rack and finds it painful to move. His

left shoulder seems out of joint. He is offered a chair and wine. He feels that he must stand to tell his story, for his life is at stake.

1. THANKS, Sir, but, should it please the reverend Court,
I feel I can stand somehow, half sit down
Without help, make shift to even speak, you see,
Fortified by the sip of . . . . why, 'tis wine,
Velletri,—and not vinegar and gall,[1]
So changed and good the times grow! Thanks, kind Sir!
Oh, but one sip's enough! I want my head
To save my neck, there's work awaits me still.

Law is law.
Noblemen were exempt, the vulgar thought,
From racking, but, since law thinks otherwise,
I have been put to the rack: all's over now,
And neither wrist—what men style, out of joint:
If any harm be, 'tis the shoulder-blade,
The left one, that seems wrong i' the socket,—Sirs,
Much could not happen,[2] I was quick to faint,
Being past my prime of life, and out of health.
In short I thank you,—yes, and mean the word.
Needs must the Court be slow to understand
How this quite novel form of taking pain,
This getting tortured merely in the flesh,
Amounts to almost an agreeable change
In my case, me fastidious, plied too much
With opposite treatment, used (forgive the joke)
To the rasp-tooth toying with this brain of mine,
And, in and out my heart, the play o' the probe.
Four years have I been operated on
I' the soul, do you see—its tense or tremulous part—
My self-respect, my care for a good name,
Pride in an old one, love of kindred—just
A mother, brothers, sisters, and the like,
That looked up to my face when days were dim,

[1] Such as was offered Christ when he was on the cross.
[2] To me on the rack.

And fancied they found light there—
A trifle of torture to the flesh, like yours,
While soul is spared such foretaste of hell-fire, is naught.
Your sole mistake,—dare I submit so much
To the reverend Court?—has been in all this pains
To make a stone roll down hill,—rack and wrench
And rend a man to pieces, all for what?
Why—make him ope mouth in his own defence,
For that, out come the implements of law!
May it content my lords the gracious Court
To listen only half so patient-long
As I will in that sense profusely speak,
And—fie, they shall not call in screws to help!

I killed Pompilia Franceschini, Sirs;
Killed too the Comparini, husband, wife,
Who called themselves, by a notorious lie,
Her father and her mother to ruin me.
There's the irregular deed: you want no more
Than right interpretation of the same,
And truth so far—am I to understand?
To that then, with convenient speed,—because
Now I consider,—yes, despite my boast,
There is an ailing in this omoplat[3]
May clip my speech all too abruptly close,
Whatever the good-will in me. Now for truth!

I am representative of a great line,
One of the first of the old families
In Arezzo, ancientest of Tuscan towns.
I at least descend from a Guido once
Homager to the Empire, nought below—
Of which account as proof that, none o' the line
Having a single gift beyond brave blood,
Or able to do aught but give, give, give
In blood and brain, in house and land and cash,
Not get and garner as the vulgar may,

[3] Shoulder blade.

We become poor
This struck me, I was poor who should be rich,
Therefore I must make more forthwith, transfer
My stranded self, born fish with gill and fin
Fit for the deep sea, now left bare-backed
In slush and sand, a show to crawlers vile
Reared of the low-tide and aright therein.
The enviable youth with the old name,
Wide chest, stout arms, sound brow and pricking veins,
A heartful of desire, man's natural load,
A brainful of belief, the noble's lot,—
All this life, cramped and gasping, high and dry
I' the wave's retreat,—the misery, good my lords,
Which made you merriment at Rome of late,—[4]
It made me reason, rather—muse, demand
—Why our bare dropping palace
Could hardly show a turret sound?
Why Beatrice Countess, whose son I am,
Cowered in the winter-time as she spun flax,
Blew on the earthen basket of live ash,
Instead of jaunting forth in coach and six?
I asked my fellows, how came this about?
"Why, Jack, the suttler's child, perhaps the camp's,
Went to the wars, fought sturdily, took a town
And got rewarded as was natural.
—Well, let me go, do likewise: war's the word—
That way the Franceschini worked at first,
I'll take my turn, try soldiership."—"What, you?
The eldest son and heir and prop o' the house,
So do you see your duty? Here's your post,
Hard by the hearth and altar.
Stand fast, stick tight, conserve your gods at home!"
"—Well then, the quiet course, the contrary trade!
We had a cousin amongst us once was Pope,
And minor glories manifold. Try the Church."
"You a priest? How were marriage possible?

[4] During the trial of Pompilia and Caponsacchi for running away from Arezzo.

There must be Franceschini till time ends—
That's your vocation. Make your brothers priests,
But save one Franceschini for the age!
Be not the vine but dig and dung its root,
Be not a priest but gird up priesthood's loins,
With one foot in Arezzo stride to Rome,
Spend yourself there and bring the purchase back!
Go hence to Rome, be guided!"

2. So I was.
Humbly I helped the Church till here I stand,—
Or would stand but for the omoplat, you see!
Bidden qualify for Rome, I, having a field,
Went, sold it, laid the sum at Peter's foot:
Which means—I settled home-accounts with speed,
Set apart just a modicum should suffice
To keep the villa's head above the waves
Of weed inundating its oil and wine,
Shared the residue
Between my mother and brothers and sisters there,
Black-eyed babe Donna This and Donna That,
As near to starving as might decently be,
—Left myself journey-charges, change of suit,
Started for Rome, and led the life prescribed.

Close to the Church, though clean of it, I assumed
Three or four orders of no consequence,
While, for the world's sake, I rode, danced, and gamed,
Quitted me like a courtier, measured mine
With whatsoever blade had fame in fence,
Sirs, I said, "Here wait, do service,
And, in due time, I nowise doubt at all,
The recognition of my service comes.
Next year I'm only sixteen. I can wait."

I waited thirty years, may it please the Court:
Saw meanwhile many a denizen o' the dung

Hop, skip, jump o'er my shoulder, make him wings
And fly aloft,—succeed, in the usual phrase.
While I—kept fasts and feasts innumerable,
Matins and vespers, functions to no end
I' the train of Monsignor and Eminence,
As gentleman-squire, and for my zeal's reward
Have rarely missed a place at the table-foot.[5]

Brief, one day I felt
The tick of time inside me, turning-point
And slight sense there was now enough of this:
That I was near my seventh climacteric,[6]
Hard upon, if not over, the middle life,
And, although fed by the east-wind, fulsome-fine
With foretaste of the Land of Promise, still
My gorge gave symptom it might play me false;[7]
Better not press it further,—be content
With living and dying only a nobleman,
Who merely had a father great and rich,
Who simply had one greater and richer yet,
And so on back and back till first and best
Began i' the night; I finish in the day.[8]
"The mother must be getting old," I said,
"The sisters are well wedded away, our name
Can manage to pass a sister off, at need,
And do for dowry: both my brothers thrive—
Regular priests they are,
My spare revenue must keep me and mine.
I am tired: Arezzo's air is good to breathe;
Vittiano,—one limes flocks of thrushes there;
A leathern coat costs little and lasts long:[9]

[5] The least important place at an official dinner.

[6] The body is said to change completely every seven years. Guido was getting on towards seven times seven.

[7] My food might make me vomit.

[8] In full publicity.

[9] At his farm hunting is good, and clothes cheap.

Let me bid hope good-bye, content at home!"

Thus, one day, I disbosomed me and bowed.
Whereat began the little buzz and thrill
O' the gazers round me; each face brightened up:
As when at your Casino, deep in dawn,
A gamester says at last, "I play no more,
Forego gain, acquiesce in loss, withdraw
Anyhow:" and the watchers of his ways,
A trifle struck compunctious at the word,
Yet sensible of relief, breathe free once more,
Break up the ring, venture polite advice—[10]
"How, Sir? So scant of heart and hope indeed?
Retire with neither cross nor pile from play?—
Just when luck turns and the fine throw sweeps all?"
Such was the chorus: and its goodwill meant—
"See that the loser leave door handsomely!
There's an ill look,—it's sinister, spoils sport,
When an old bruised and battered year-by-year
Fighter with fortune, not a penny in poke,
Reels down the steps of our establishment,
And staggers on broad daylight and the world,
In shagrag beard and doleful doublet, drops
And breaks his heart on the outside: people prate
'Such is the profit of a trip upstairs!'
Contrive he sidle forth,[11] bidding down
No curse but blessings rather on our heads"
Whereon protested Paul, "Go hang yourselves!
Leave him to me. Count Guido and brother of mine,
A word in your ear! Take courage since faint heart
Ne'er won . . . . aha, fair lady, don't men say?
If the Church want no more of you, the Court
No more, and the Camp as little, the ingrates,—come,
Count you are counted: still you've coat to back,

[10] The old gamblers pretend to advise him to gamble on, but are glad to get rid of him with as little fuss as possible.

[11] Slip out sideways so that no one will see him.

Not cloth of gold and tissue, as we hoped,
But cloth with sparks and spangles on its frieze
From Camp, Court, Church, enough to make a shine,
Entitle you to carry home a wife
With the proper dowry, let the worst betide!
Why, it was just a wife you meant to take!"

3. Now, Paul's advice was weighty: priests should know:
And Paul apprised me, ere the week was out,
That Pietro and Violante, the easy pair,
Had just the daughter and exact the sum
To truck for the quality of myself: "She's young,
Pretty and rich: you're noble, classic, choice.
Is it to be a match?" "A match," said I.
Done! He proposed all, I accepted all,
And we performed all.

"What?
No blush at the avowal you dared buy
A girl of age beseems your granddaughter
Like ox or ass? Are flesh and blood a ware?
Are heart and soul a chattel?"

Softly, Sirs!
Will the Court of its charity teach poor me
Anxious to learn, of any way i' the world,
Allowed by custom and convenience, save
This same which, taught from my youth up, I trod?
Take me along with you; where was the wrong step?
If what I gave in barter, style and state
And all that hangs to Franceschinihood,
Were worthless,—why, society goes to ground,
Its rules are idiot's-rambling. Honour of birth,—
If that thing has no value, cannot buy
Something with value of another sort,
You've no reward nor punishment to give
I' the giving or the taking honour; straight
Your social fabric, pinnacle to base,

Comes down a-clatter like a house of cards.
Get honour, and keep honour free from flaw,
Aim at still higher honour,—gabble o' the goose!
Go bid a second blockhead like myself
Spend fifty years in guarding bubbles of breath,
Soapsuds with air i' the belly, gilded brave,
Guarded and guided, all to break at touch
O' the first young girl's hand and first old fool's purse!
All my privation and endurance, all
Love, loyalty, and labour dared and did,
Fiddle-de-dee!—why, doer and darer both,—
Count Guido Franceschini had hit the mark
Far better, spent his life with more effect,
As a dancer or a prizer; trades that pay![12]

On the other hand, bid this buffoonery cease,
Admit that honour is a privilege,
The question follows, privilege worth what?
Why, worth the market-price,—now up, now down,
Just so with this as with all other ware:
Therefore essay the market, sell your name,
Style and condition to who buys them best!
"Does my name purchase," had I dared inquire,
"Your niece, my lord?" there would have been rebuff
Though courtesy, your lordship cannot else—
"Not altogether! Rank for rank may stand:
But I have wealth beside, you—poverty;
Your scale flies up there:[13] bid a second bid,
Rank too, and wealth too!" Reasoned like yourself!
But was it to you I went with goods to sell?
This time 'twas my scale quietly kissed the ground,
Mere rank against mere wealth—some youth beside,
Some beauty too, thrown into the bargain, just
As the buyer likes or lets alone.[14] I thought

[12] If honor is not worth more than wealth, then the trades that pay, such as stage dancing or prizefighting, should be followed.

[13] Your value weighs too little.

[14] Pompilia was young and beautiful.

To deal o' the square: others find fault, it seems:
The thing is, those my offer most concerned,
Pietro, Violante, cried they fair or foul?
What did they make o' the terms? Preposterous terms?
Why then accede so promptly, close with such
Nor take a minute to chaffer? Bargain struck,
They straight grew bilious, wished their money back,
Repented them, no doubt: why, so did I.

I am charged, I know, with gilding fact by fraud;
I falsified and fabricated, wrote
Myself down roughly richer than I prove,
Rendered a wrong revenue,—grant it all!
Mere grace, mere coquetry such fraud, I say:
A flourish round the figures of a sum
For fashion's sake, that deceives nobody.
The veritable back-bone, understood
Essence of this same bargain, blank and bare,
Being the exchange of quality for wealth,—
They knew and I knew where the back-bone lurked
I' the writhings of the bargain, lords, believe!
I paid down all engaged for, to a doit,
Delivered them just that which, their life long,
They hungered in the hearts of them to gain—
Incorporation with nobility thus
In word and deed: for that they gave me wealth.
But when they came to try their gain, my gift,
Quit Rome and qualify for Arezzo, take
The tone o' the new sphere that absorbed the old,
Put away gossip Jack and goody Joan
And go become familiar with the Great,
Why, then,—they found that all was vanity,
Vexation, and what Solomon describes!
The old abundant city-fare was best,
The kindly warmth o' the commons, the glad clap
Of the equal on the shoulder,—best, best and best
Beyond compare!—down to the loll itself

O' the pot-house settle,[15]—better such a bench
Than the stiff crucifixion by my dais
Under the piece-meal damask canopy
With the coroneted coat of arms a-top!
Poverty and privation for pride's sake,
All they engaged to easily brave and bear,—
With the fit upon them and their brains a-work,—
Proved unendurable to the sobered sots.
A banished prince, now,
Had grinned and borne: the citizen shrieked,
Summoned the neighbourhood to attest the wrong,
Made noisy protest he was murdered,—stoned
And burned and drowned and hanged,—then broke away,
He and his wife, to tell their Rome the rest.
And this you admire, you men o' the world, my lords?
This moves compassion, makes you doubt my faith?
Why, I appeal to . . . . sun and moon? Not I!
To all who strip a vizard from a face,
A body from its padding, and a soul
From froth and ignorance it styles itself,—
If this be other than the daily hap
Of purblind greed that dog-like still drops bone,
Grasps shadow, and then howls the case is hard![16]

4. So much for them so far: now for myself,
My profit or loss i' the matter: married am I:
Text whereon friendly censors burst to preach.
Ay, at Rome even, long ere I was left
To regulate her life for my young bride
Alone at Arezzo, friendliness outbroke,
"Purchase and sale being thus so plain a point
From the bride's soul what is it you expect?"
Why, loyalty and obedience.
Father and mother shall the woman leave,

[15] Bench outside an alehouse.

[16] In the fable the dog saw his image in the water and dropped his bone to get the other dog's bone.

Cleave to the husband, be it for weal or woe:
There is the law: what sets this law aside
In my particular case? My friends submit
"Guide, guardian, benefactor,—fee, faw, fum,
The fact is you are forty-five years old,
Nor very comely even for that age:
Girls must have boys." Why, let girls say so then,
Nor call the boys and men, who say the same,
Brute this and beast the other as they do!
I shall still think nobler of the sex,
Believe a woman still may take a man
For the short period that his soul wears flesh,
And, for the soul's sake, understand the fault
Of armour frayed by fighting.[17] Tush, it tempts
One's tongue too much! I'll say—the law's the law:
With a wife, I look to find all wifeliness,
As when I buy, timber and twig, a tree—
I buy the song o' the nightingale inside.

Such was the pact: Pompilia from the first
Broke it, refused from the beginning day
Either in body or soul to cleave to mine,
And published it forthwith to all the world.
No rupture,—you must join ere you can break,—
Before we had cohabited a month
She found I was a devil and no man,—
Made common cause with those who found as much,
Her parents, Pietro and Violante,—moved
Heaven and earth to the rescue of all three.
In four months' time, the time o' the parents' stay,
Arezzo was a-ringing, bells in a blaze,
With the unimaginable story rife
I' the mouth of man, woman, and child—to wit
My misdemeanour. First the lighter side,
Ludicrous face of things,—how very poor
The Franceschini had become at last,

[17] The flesh made old with living.

The meanness and the misery of each shift
To save a soldo, stretch and make ends meet.
Next, the more hateful aspect,—how myself
With cruelty beyond Caligula's
Had stripped and beaten, robbed and murdered them,
The good old couple, I decoyed, abused,
Plundered and then cast out, and happily so,
Since,—in due course the abominable comes,—
Woe worth the poor young wife left lonely here!
Repugnant in my person as my mind,
I sought,—was ever heard of such revenge?
—To lure and bind her to so cursed a couch,
Such co-embrace with sulphur, snake and toad,
That she was fain to rush forth, call the stones
O' the common street to save her. This,
Was charged to me by the universal voice
At the instigation of my four-month's wife!—
And then you ask "Such charges so preferred,
(Truly or falsely, here concerns us not)
Pricked you to punish now if not before?—
Did not the harshness double itself, the hate
Harden?" I answer "Have it your way and will!"

Say my resentment grew apace: what then?
Do you cry out on the marvel? When I find
That pure smooth egg which, laid within my nest,
Could not but hatch a comfort to us all,
Issues a cockatrice for me and mine,
Do you stare to see me stamp on it? Swans are soft.
Is it not clear that she you call my wife,
That any wife of any husband, caught
Whetting a sting like this against his breast,—
Speckled with fragments of the fresh-broke shell,
Married a month and making outcry thus,—
Proves a plague-prodigy to God and man?
She married: what was it she married for,
Counted upon and meant to meet thereby?

"Love" suggests some one, "love," a little word
"Whereof we have not heard one syllable."
So, the Pompilia, child, girl, wife, in one,
Wanted the beating pulse, the rolling eye,
The frantic gesture, Guido's love—
Why not provençal roses in his shoe,
Plume to his cap, and trio of guitars
At casement, with a bravo close beside?
Good things all these are, clearly claimable
When the fit price is paid the proper way.

Had it been some friend's wife, now, threw her fan
At my foot, with just this pretty scrap attached,
"Shame, death, damnation—fall these as they may,
So I find you, for a minute! Come this eve!"
—Why, at such sweet self-sacrifice,—who knows?
I might have fired up, found me at my post,
Ardent from head to heel, nor feared catch cough.
Nay, had some other friend's . . . . say, daughter, tripped
Upstairs and tumbled flat and frank on me,
Bareheaded and barefooted, with loose hair
And garments all at large,—cried "Take me thus!
Duke So-and-So, the greatest man in Rome—
To escape his hand and heart have I broke bounds,
Traversed the town and reached you!"—Then, indeed,
The lady had not reached a man of ice!
I would have rummaged, ransacked at the word
Those old odd corners of an empty heart
For remnants of dim love the long disused,
And dusty crumblings of romance! But here,
We talk of just a marriage, of you please—
The every-day conditions and no more;
Where do these bind me to bestow one drop
Of blood shall dye my wife's true-love-knot pink?
Pompilia was no pigeon, —but a hawk,[18]
I bought at a hawk's price and carried home

[18] A falcon, or hunting bird.

To do hawk's service—at the Rotunda, say,
Where, six o' the callow nestlings in a row,
You pick and choose and pay the price for such.
I have paid my pound, await my penny's worth,
So, hoodwink, starve, and properly train my bird,
And, should she prove a haggard,—twist her neck![19]
Put case that I mishandle, flurry, and fright
My hawk through clumsiness in sportsmanship,
Twitch out five pens where plucking one would serve[20]—
What, shall she bite and claw to mend the case?
And, if you find I pluck five more for that,
Shall you weep "Now he roughs the turtle[21] there?"

5. Such was the starting; now of the further step.
The couple, father and mother of my wife,
Returned to Rome, published before my lords,
Put into print, made circulate far and wide
That they had cheated me who cheated them?
Pompilia, I supposed their daughter, drew
Breath first 'mid Rome's worst rankness, through the deed
Of a drab and a rogue, was bye-blow bastard-babe
Of a nameless strumpet, passed off, palmed on me
As the daughter with the dowry. Daughter? Dirt
O' the kennel! Dowry? Dust o' the street! Nought more,
Nought less, nought else but—oh—ah—assuredly
A Franceschini and my very wife!

Now take this charge as you will, for false or true,—
Pompilia's duty was no doubtful one.
You put the protestation in her mouth
"Henceforward and forevermore, avaunt
Ye fiends, who drop disguise and glare revealed
In your own shape, no longer father mine
Nor mother mine! Too nakedly you hate

[19] If the bird after training will not hunt, then she is killed.
[20] Pull out five large feathers to make quill pens.
[21] A turtledove, an especially affectionate bird.

Me whom you looked as if you loved once,—me
Whom, whether true or false, your tale now damns,
Ah, but—that husband, what the wonder were!—
If, far from casting thus away the rag
Smeared with the plague, his hand had chanced upon,
If he, repudiate not, renounce nowise,
But, guarding, guiding me, maintain my cause,
Ah, did he do thus, what a friend were he!
Anger he might show,—who can stamp out flame
Yet spread no black o' the brand?—yet, rough albeit
In the act, as whose bare feet feel embers scorch.
What grace were his, what gratitude were mine!"
Such protestation should have been my wife's.
Looking for this, do I exact too much?

Soon she discovered she was young and fair,
That many in Arezzo knew as much,—
Yes, this next cup of bitterness, my lords,
Had to begin go filling, drop by drop,
Its measure up of full disgust for me,
Filtered into by every noisome drain[22]—
Society's sink toward which all moisture runs.
Would not you prophesy—"She on whose brow is stamped
The note of the imputation that we know,—
Such an one, to disprove the frightful charge,
What will she but exaggerate chastity,
Err in excess of wifehood, as it were,
Renounce even levities permitted youth,"
So you expect. How did the devil decree?
Why, my lords, just the contrary of course!
It was in the house from the window, at the church
From the hassock,—where the theatre lent its lodge,
Or staging for the public show left space,—
That still Pompilia needs must find herself
Launching her looks forth, letting looks reply,
Till one day, what is it knocks at my clenched teeth

[22] By gossip.

But the cup full, curse-collected all for me?
And I must needs drink, drink this gallant's praise,
That minion's prayer, the other fop's reproach,
And come at the dregs to—Caponsacchi! Sirs,
I,—chin deep in a marsh of misery,
Struggling to extricate my name and fame
And fortune from the marsh would down them all,
My face the sole unstrangled part of me,—
I must have this new gad-fly[23] in that face,
Must free me from the attacking lover too!

Men say I battled ungracefully enough—
Was harsh, uncouth and ludricrous beyond
The proper part o' the husband,
Breathed threatenings, rage and slaughter! What you will!
And the end has come, the doom is verily here,
Unhindered by the threatening. See fate's flare
Full on each face of the dead guilty three!
Look at them well, and now, lords, look at this!
Tell me: if on that day when I found first
That Caponsacchi thought the nearest way
To his church was some half-mile round by my door,
And that he so admired, shall I suppose,
The manner of the swallow's come-and-go
Between the props o' the window over-head,—
That window happening to be my wife's,—
As to stand gazing by the hour on high,
Of May-eves, while she sat and let him smile,—
If I,—instead of threatening, talking big,
Showing hair-powder, a prodigious pinch,
For poison in a bottle,—making believe
At desperate doings with a bauble-sword,
And other bugaboo-and-baby-work,—
Had, with the vulgarest household implement,
Calmly and quietly cut off, clean thro' bone,
But one joint of one finger of my wife,

[23] A persistent biting insect.

Saying "For listening to the serenade,
Here's your ring-finger shorter a full third:
Be certain I will slice away next joint,
Next time that anybody underneath
Seems somehow to be sauntering as he hoped
A flower would eddy out of your hand to his
While you please fidget with the branch above
O' the rose-tree in the terrace!"—had I done so,
Why, there had followed a quick sharp scream, some pain,
Much calling for plaister, damage to the dress,
A somewhat sulky countenance next day,
Perhaps reproaches,—but reflections too!
So, by this time, my true and obedient wife
Might have been telling beads with a gloved hand;[24]
Awkward a little at pricking hearts and darts
On sampler[25] possibly, but well otherwise:
Not where Rome shudders now to see her lie.
I give that for the course a wise man takes;
I took the other however, tried the fool's,
The lighter remedy, brandished rapier dread
With cork-ball at the tip,[26]
Called her a terrible nickname, and the like
And there an end.

6. And what was the end of that?
What was the good effect o' the gentle course?
Why, one night I went drowsily to bed,
Dropped asleep suddenly, not suddenly woke,
But did wake with rough rousing and loud cry,
To find noon in my face, a crowd in my room,
Fumes in my brain, fire in my throat, my wife
Gone God knows whither,—rifled vesture-chest,
And ransacked money-coffer. "What does it mean?"
The servants had been drugged too, stared and yawned.

[24] To hide the mutilation.
[25] Hand embroidery.
[26] Blunted and harmless.

"It must be that our lady has eloped!"
—"Whither and with whom?"—"With whom but the Canon's self?
One recognises Caponsacchi there!"—
(By this time the admiring neighbourhood
Joined chorus round me while I rubbed my eyes)
"'Tis months since their intelligence began,—
A comedy the town was privy to,—
He wrote and she wrote, she spoke, he replied,
And going in and out your house last night
Was easy work for one . . . . to be plain with you . . . .
Accustomed to do both, at dusk and dawn
When you were absent,—at the villa, you know,
Where husbandry required the master-mind.
Did not you know? Why, we all knew, you see!"

And presently, bit by bit, the full and true
Particulars of the tale were volunteered
With all the breathless zeal of friendship[27]—"Thus
Matters were managed: at the seventh hour of night . . . .
—Later, at daybreak . . . . Caponsacchi came . . . .
—While you and all your household slept like death,
Drugged as your supper was with drowsy stuff . . . .
Your wife led the way,
Out of doors, on to the gate . . . ."—"But gates are shut,
In a decent town, to darkness and such deeds:"
"They climbed the wall—your lady must be lithe—
At the gap, the broken bit . . . .
A calash in readiness
Took the two principals, all alone at last,
To gate San Spirito, which o'erlooks the road,
Leads to Perugia, Rome and liberty."
Bit by bit thus made-up mosaic-wise,
Flat lay my fortune. So much
For the terrible effect of threatening, Sirs!

[27] The false friendship of gossip.

Well, this way I was shaken wide awake,
Doctored and drenched, somewhat unpoisoned so;
Then, set on horseback and bid seek the lost,
I started alone, head of me, heart of me
Fire, and each limb as languid . . . . ah, sweet lords,
Bethink you!—poison-torture, try persuade
The next refractory Molinist[28] with that!
Floundered thro' day and night, another day
And yet another night, and so at last,
As Lucifer kept falling to find hell,
Tumbled into the court-yard of an inn
At the end, and fell on whom I thought to find,
Even Caponsacchi,—what part once was priest,
Cast to the winds now with the cassock-rags:
In cape and sword a cavalier confessed,
There stood he chiding dilatory grooms,
Chafing that only horseflesh and no team
Of eagles would supply the last relay,
Whirl him along the league, the one post more
Between the couple and Rome and liberty.
'Twas dawn, the couple were rested in a sort,
And though the lady, tired,—the tenderer sex,—
Still lingered in her chamber,—to adjust
The limp hair, look for any blush astray,—
She would descend in a twinkling,—"Have you out
The horses therefore!"

So did I find my wife.
Is the case complete? Do your eyes here see with mine?
Even the parties dared deny no one
Point out of all these points.

What follows next?
"Why, that then was the time," you interpose,
"Or then or never, while the fact was fresh,
To take the natural vengeance."

[28] Heretic or religious insurgent.

Listen, my masters, and distinguish here!
At first, I called in law to act and help:
And bade arrest the guilty couple, Sirs!
We had some trouble to do so—you have heard
They braved me,—he with arrogance and scorn,
She, with a volubility of curse,
A conversancy in the skill of tooth
And claw to make suspicion seem absurd,
Nay, an alacrity to put to proof
At my own throat my own sword, teach me so
To try conclusions better the next time,—
Which did the proper service with the mob.[29]
They never tried to put on mask at all.

We searched the chamber where they passed the night,
Found what confirmed the worst was feared before,
—Letters, to-wit,
Love-laden, each the bag o' the bee that bore
Honey from lily and rose to Cupid's hive,—
Now, poetry in some rank blossom-burst,
Now, prose,—"Come here, go there, wait such a while,
He's at the villa, now he's back again:
We are saved, we are lost, we are lovers all the same!"
All in order, all complete,—even to a clue
To the drowsiness that happed so opportune—
No mystery, when I read "Of all things, find
What wine Sir Jealousy decides to drink—
Red wine? Because a sleeping-potion, dust
Dropped into white, discolours wine and shows."

"Oh, but we did not write a single word!
Somebody forged the letters in our name!—"
Both in a breath protested presently.

Such the case, so complete in fact and proof
I laid at the feet of law,—there sat my lords,

[29] Made the crowd cheer.

Here sit they now, so may they ever sit
In easier attitude than suits my haunch!

7. In this same chamber did I bare my sores
O' the soul and not the body.
To every one o' my grievances law gave
Redress, could purblind eye but see the point,
The wife stood a convicted runagate
From house and husband,—driven to such a course
By what she somehow took for cruelty,
Oppression and imperilment of life—
Not that such things were, but that so they seemed:
Therefore, the end conceded lawful
It follows that all means to the lawful end
Are lawful likewise,—poison, theft, and flight,
As for the priest's part, did he meddle or make,
Enough that he too thought life jeopardised;
Concede him then the colour charity
Casts on a doubtful course,—if blackish white
Or whitish black, will charity hesitate?
What did he else but act the precept out,
Leave, like a provident shepherd, his safe flock
To follow the single lamb and strayaway?
Best hope so and think so,—that the ticklish time
I' the carriage, the tempting privacy, the last
Somewhat ambiguous accident at the inn,
—All may bear explanation: may? then, must!

The letters,—do they so incriminate?
But what if the whole prove a prank o' the pen,
Flight of the fancy, none of theirs at all,
Bred of the vapours of my brain belike,
Or at worst mere exercise of scholar's-wit
In the courtly Caponsacchi: verse, convict?
Wherefore so ready to infer the worst?

Still, I did righteously in bringing doubts
For the law to solve,—take the solution now!

"Seeing that the said associates, wife and priest,
Bear themselves not without some touch of blame
—Else why the pother, scandal, and outcry
Which trouble our peace and require chastisement?
We, for complicity in Pompilia's flight
And deviation, and carnal intercourse
With the same, do set aside and relegate
The Canon Caponsacchi for three years
At Civita in the neighbourhood of Rome:
And we consign Pompilia to the care
Of a certain Sisterhood of penitents
I' the city's self, expert to deal with such."
Word for word, there's your judgment! Read it, lords,
Re-utter your deliberate penalty
For the crime yourselves establish! Your award—
Who chop a man's right-hand off at the wrist
For tracing with forefinger words in wine
O' the table of a drinking-booth that bear
Interpretation as they mocked the Church!
—Who brand a woman black between the breasts
For sinning by connection with a Jew:
You mete out punishment such and such, yet so
Punish the adultery of wife and priest!
Take note of that, before the Molinists do.

While I stood rapt away with wonderment,
Voices broke in upon my mood and muse.
"Do you sleep?" began the friends at either ear,
"The case is settled,—
With law's award, budge! Back into your place!
Your betters shall arrange the rest for you.
We'll enter a new action, claim divorce:
Your marriage was a cheat themselves allow:
You erred i' the person,—might have married thus
Your sister or your daughter unaware.
We'll gain you, that way, liberty at least."

I was in humble frame of mind, be sure!
I bowed, betook me to my place again.
Station by station I retraced the road,
Touched at this hostel, passed this post-house by,
Where, fresh-remembered yet, the fugitives
Had risen to the heroic stature: still—
"That was the bench they sat on,—there's the board
They took the meal at,—yonder garden-ground
They leaned across the gate of,"—ever a word
O' the Helen and the Paris,[30] with "Ha! you're he,
The . . . . much-commiserated husband?"

Step by step, across the pelting, did I reach
Arezzo, underwent the archway's grin,
Traversed the length of sarcasm in the street,
Found myself in my horrible house once more
And after a colloquy
With the mother and the brothers, stiffened me
Strait out from head to foot as dead man does,
And, thus prepared for life as he for hell,
Marched to the public Square and met the world.
Apologise for the pincers, palliate screws?
Ply me with such toy-trifles, I entreat!
Trust who has tried both sulphur and sops-in-wine!

I played the man as I best might, bade friends
Put non-essentials by and face the fact.
"What need to hang myself as you advise?
The paramour is banished,
Why should law banish innocence an inch?
Here's guilt then, what else do I care to know?
The adulteress lies imprisoned,—whether in a well
With bricks above and a snake for company,
Or tied by a garter to a bed-post, much
I mind what's little,—least's enough and to spare!
The little fillip[31] on the coward's cheek

[30] Heroic lovers.
[31] A quick slap with the finger tips.

Serves as though crab-tree cudgel broke his pate.
Law has pronounced there's punishment, less or more:
And I take note o' the fact and use it thus—
For the first flaw in the original bond,
I claim release. My contract was to wed
The daughter of Pietro and Violante. Both
Protest they never had a child at all.
Then I have never made a contract: good!
Cancel me quick the thing pretended one.
I shall be free. What matter if hurried over
The harbour-boom by a great favouring tide,
Or the last of a spent ripple that lifts and leaves?
The Abate is about it. Laugh who wins!
You shall not laugh me out of faith in law!
I listen, through all your noise, to Rome!"

8. Rome spoke.
In three months letters thence admonished me
"Your plan for the divorce is all mistake.
I would hold, now, had you, taking thought to wed
Rachel of the blue eye and golden hair,
Found swarth-skinned Leah cumber couch next day:
But Rachel, blue-eyed golden-haired aright,
Proving to be only Laban's child, not Lot's,
Remains yours all the same for ever more.
No whit to the purpose is your plea: you
Are met by a cross-suit
For separation, of the Rachel here,
From bed and board,—she is the injured one,
You did the wrong and have to answer it.
As for the circumstance of imprisonment
The durance is already at an end;
The convent-quiet preyed upon her health,
She is transferred now to her parent's house,
A certain villa smothered up in vines
At the town's edge by the gate i' the Pauline way,
Out of eye-reach, out of ear-shot, little and lone,

Whither a friend,—at Civita, we hope,
A good half-dozen-hour's ride off,—might, some eve,
Betake himself, and whence ride back, some morn,
Nobody the wiser."

When I sought home,—with such news, mounted stair
And sat at last in the sombre gallery,
('Twas Autumn, the old mother in bed betimes,
Having to bear that cold, the finer frame
Of her daughter-in-law had found intolerable—
The brother, walking misery away
O' the mountain-side with dog and gun belike)
As I supped, ate the coarse bread, drank the wine
Weak once, now acrid with the toad's-head-squeeze,[32]
My wife's bestowment,—I broke silence thus:
"Let me, a man, manfully meet the fact,
Confront the worst o' the truth, end, and have peace!
I am irremediably beaten here,—
The gross illiterate vulgar couple,[33]—bah!
Why, they have measured forces, mastered mine,
Made me their spoil and prey from first to last.
They have got my name,—'tis nailed now fast to theirs,
The child or changeling is anyway my wife;
Point by point as they plan they execute,
They gain all, and I lose all—even to the lure
That led to loss,—they have the wealth again
They hazarded awhile to hook me with,
Have caught the fish and find the bait entire:
They even have their child or changeling back
To trade with, turn to account a second time.
They have caught me in the cavern where I fell,
Covered my loudest cry for human aid
With this enormous paving-stone of shame.
Well, are we demigods or merely clay?
Is success still attendant on desert?

[32] The poison supposed to come from the head of a toad.
[33] Pompilia's parents.

Is this, we live on, heaven and the final state,
Or earth which means probation to the end?
Why claim escape from man's predestined lot
Of being beaten and baffled?—God's decree,
In which I, bowing bruised head, acquiesce.
One of us Franceschini fell long since
I' the Holy Land, betrayed, tradition runs,
To Paynims by the feigning of a girl
He rushed to free from ravisher, and found
Lay safe enough with friends in ambuscade
Who flayed him while she clapped her hands and laughed:
Let me end, falling by a like device.
It will not be so hard. I am the last
O' my line which will not suffer any more.
I have attained to my full fifty years,
(About the average of us all, 'tis said,
Though it seems longer to the unlucky man)
—Lived through my share of life; let all end here,
Me and the house and grief and shame at once.
Friend my informants,—I can bear your blow!"

And I believe 'twas in no unmeet match
For the stoic's mood, with something like a smile,
That, when morose December roused me next,
I took into my hand, broke seal to read
The new epistle from Rome. "All to no use!
Whate'er the turn next injury take," smiled I,
"Here's one has chosen his part and knows his cue.
I am done with, dead now; strike away, good friends!
Is the parentage of my wife demonstrated
Infamous to her wish? Parades she now
Loosed of the cincture that so irked the loin?[34]
Has the priest, with nobody to court beside,
Courted the Muse in exile, hitched my hap
Into a rattling ballad-rhyme which, bawled
At tavern-doors, wakes rapture everywhere,

[34] Free from restraint, and boasting of it.

And helps cheap wine down throat this Christmas time,
Any or all of these!
As well, good friends, you cursed my palace here
To its old cold stone face,—
Or spat on the statue's cheek, the impatient world
Sees cumber tomb-top in our family church:
My brothers are priests, and childless so; that's well—
And, thank God most for this, no child leave I—
None after me to bear till his heart break
The being a Franceschini and my son!"

"Nay," said the letter, "but you have just that!
A babe, your veritable son and heir—
Lawful,—'tis only eight months since your wife
Left you,—so, son and heir, your babe was born
Last Wednesday in the villa,—you see the cause
For quitting Convent without beat of drum,
Stealing a hurried march to this retreat
That's not so savage as the Sisterhood
To slips and stumbles: Pietro's heart is soft,
Violante leans to pity's side,—the pair
Ushered you into life a bouncing boy:
And he's already hidden away and safe
From any claim on him you mean to make—
They need him for themselves,—dont' fear, they know
The use o' the bantling,—the nerve thus laid bare
To nip at, new and nice, with finger-nail!"

9. Then I rose up like fire, and fire-like roared.
What, all is only beginning not ending now?
The worm which wormed its way from skin through flesh
To the bone and there lay biting, did its best,
What, it goes on to scrape at the bone's self,
Will wind to inmost marrow and madden me?
There's to be yet my representative,
Another of the name shall keep displayed

The flag with the ordure on it.[35]
Is he indeed my flesh and blood, this babe?
Was it because fate forged a link at last
Betwixt my wife and me, and both alike
Found we had henceforth some one thing to love,
Was it when she could damn my soul indeed
She unlatched door, let all the devils o' the dark
Dance in on me to cover her escape?
Why then, the surplusage of disgrace, the spilth
Over and above the measure of infamy,
Failing to take effect on my coarse flesh,
Seasoned with scorn now, saturate with shame,—
Is saved to instil on and corrode the brow,
The baby-softness of my first-born child—
The child I had died to see though in a dream,
The child I was bid strike out for, beat the wave
And baffle the tide of troubles where I swam,
So I might touch shore, lay down life at last
At the feet so dim and distant and divine
Of the apparition, as 'twere Mary's babe
Had held, through night and storm, the torch aloft,—
Born now in very deed to bear this brand
On forehead and curse me who could not save!
Rather be the town-talk true, Square's jest, street's jeer
True, my own inmost heart's confession true,
And he's the priest's bastard and none of mine!

Ay, there was cause for flight, swift flight and sure!
The husband gets unruly, breaks all bounds
When he encounters some familiar face,
Fashion of feature, brow and eyes and lips
Where he least looked to find them,—time to fly!

This bastard then, a nest for him is made,
As the manner is of vermin, in my flesh—
Shall I let the filthy pest buzz, flap, and sting,

[35] Keep alive the family disgrace.

Busy at my vitals and, nor hand nor foot
Lift, but let be, lie still and rot resigned?
No, I appeal to God,—what says Himself,
How lessons Nature when I look to learn?
Why, that I am alive, am still a man
With brain and heart and tongue and right-hand too—
Nay, even with friends, in such a cause as this,
To right me if I fail to take my right.
No more of law; a voice beyond the law
Enters my heart, *Quis est pro Domino?*[36]

Myself, in my own Vittiano,[37] told the tale
To my own serving-people summoned there:
Told the first half of it, scarce heard to end
By judges who got done with judgment quick
And clamoured to go execute her 'hest—
Who cried "Not one of us that dig your soil
And dress your vineyard, prune your olive-trees,
But would have brained the man debauched our wife,
And staked the wife whose lust allured the man,
And paunched the Duke, had it been possible,
Who ruled the land, yet barred us such revenge!"

I fixed on the first whose eyes caught mine, some four,
Resolute youngsters with the heart still fresh,
Filled my purse with the residue o' the coin
Uncaught-up by my wife whom haste made blind,
Donned the first rough and rural garb I found,
Took whatsoever weapon came to hand,
And out we flung and on we ran or reeled
Romeward, I have no memory of our way,
Only that, when at intervals the cloud
Of horror about me opened to let in life,
I listened to some song in the ear, some snatch
Of a legend, relic of religion, stray

[36] A voice from God.
[37] Villa.

Fragment of record very strong and old
Of the first conscience, the anterior right,
The God's-gift to mankind,[38] impluse to quench
The antagonistic spark of hell and tread
Satan and all his malice into dust,
Declare to the world the one law, right is right.
Then the cloud re-encompassed me, and so
I found myself, as on the wings of winds,
Arrived: I was at Rome on Christmas Eve.

Festive bells—everywhere the Feast o' the Babe,
Joy upon earth, peace and good will to man!
I am baptised. I started and let drop
The dagger. "Where is it, His promised peace?"
Nine days o' the Birth-Feast did I pause and pray
To enter into no temptation more.
I stopped my ears even to the inner call
Of the dread duty, heard only the song
"Peace upon earth," saw nothing but the face
O' the Holy Infant and the halo there
Able to cover yet another face
Behind it, Satan's which I else should see.
But, day by day, joy waned and withered off:
The Babe's face, premature with peak and pine,
Sank into wrinkled ruinous old age,
Suffering and death, then mist-like disappeared,
And showed only the Cross at end of all,
Left nothing more to interpose 'twixt me,
And the dread duty. For the angel's song,
"Peace upon earth," louder and louder pealed
"O Lord, how long, how long be unavenged?"

On the ninth day, this grew too much for man.
I started up—"Some end must be!" at once,
Silence: then, scratching like a death-watch-tick,[39]

[38] Man's natural instinct to do right and hate wrong.

[39] The ticking sound made by insects in the walls of houses was thought to be an omen of death.

Slowly within my brain was syllabled,
"One more concession, one decisive way
And but one, to determine thee the truth,—
This way, in fine, I whisper in thy ear:
Now doubt, anon decide, thereupon act!"[40]

"That is a way, thou whisperest in my ear!
I doubt, I will decide, then act," said I—
Then beckoned my companions: "Time is come!"

10. And so, all yet uncertain save the will
To do right, and the daring aught save leave
Right undone, I did find myself at last
I' the dark before the villa with my friends,
And made the experiment, the final test,
Ultimate chance that ever was to be
For the wretchedness inside. I knocked—pronounced
The name, the predetermined touch for truth,
"What welcome for the wanderer? Open straight—
To the friend, physician, friar upon his rounds,
Traveller belated, beggar lame and blind?—"
No, but—"to Caponsacchi!" And the door
Opened.

And then,—why, even then, I think,
I' the minute that confirmed my worst of fears
Surely,—I pray God that I think aright!—
Had but Pompilia's self, the tender thing
Who once was good and pure, was once my lamb
And lay in my bosom, had the well-known shape
Fronted me in the door-way,—stood there faint
With the recent pang, perhaps, of giving birth
To what might, though by miracle, seem my child,—
Nay more, I will say, had even the aged fool
Pietro, the dotard, in whom folly and age
Wrought, more than enmity or malevolence,

[40] See if Pompilia will open the door at the name of Caponsacchi.

To practise and conspire against my peace,—
Had either of these but opened, I had paused.
But it was she the hag, she that brought hell
For a dowry with her to her husband's house,
She the mock-mother, she that made the match
And married me to perdition, spring and source
O' the fire inside me that boiled up from heart
To brain and hailed the Fury gave it birth,—
Violante Comparini, she it was,
With the old grin amid the wrinkles yet,
Opened: as if in turning from the Cross,
With trust to keep the sight and save my soul,
I had stumbled, first thing on the serpent's head
Coiled with a leer at foot of it.

There was the end!
Then was I rapt away by the impulse, one
Immeasurable everlasting wave of a need
To abolish that detested life. 'Twas done:
You know the rest and how the folds o' the thing,
Twisting for help, involved the other two
More or less serpent-like: how I was mad,
Blind, stamped on all, the earth-worms with the asp,
And ended so.

You came on me that night,
Your officers of justice,—caught the crime
In the first natural frenzy of remorse?
Twenty miles off, sound sleeping as a child
On a cloak i' the straw which promised shelter first,
With the bloody arms beside me,—was it not so?
Wherefore not? Why, how else should I be found?
I was my own self, had my sense again,
My soul safe from the serpents. I could sleep:
Indeed and, dear my lords, I shall sleep now,
Spite of my shoulder, in five minute's space,
When you dismiss me, having truth enough!

It is but a few days are passed, I find,
Since this adventure. Do you tell me, four?
Then the dead are scarce quiet where they lie,
Old Pietro, old Violante, side by side
At the church Lorenzo,—oh, they know it well!
So do I. But my wife is still alive,
Has breath enough to tell her story yet,
Her way, which is not mine, no doubt at all.
And Caponsacchi, you have summoned him,—
Was he so far to send for? Not at hand?
I thought some few o' the stabs were in his heart,
Or had not been so lavish,[41]—less had served.
Well, he too tells his story,—florid prose
As smooth as mine is rough.

You see, my lords,
There will be a lying intoxicating smoke
Born of the blood,—confusion probably,—
For lies breed lies—but all that rests with you!
The trial is no concern of mine; with me
The main of the care is over: I at least
Recognise who took that huge burthen off,
Let me begin to live again. I did
God's bidding and man's duty, so, breathe free;
Look you to the rest! I heard Himself prescribe,
That great Physician, and dared lance the core
Of the bad ulcer; and the rage abates,
I am myself and whole now: I prove cured
By the eyes that see, the ears that hear again,
The limbs that have relearned their youthful play,
The healthy taste of food and feel of clothes
And taking to our common life once more,
All that now urges my defence from death.
The willingness to live, what means it else?
Before,—but let the very action speak!
Judge for yourselves, what life seemed worth to me

[41] Pompilia was stabbed twenty-two times.

Who, not by proxy but in person, pitched
Head-foremost into danger as a fool
That never cares if he can swim or no—
So he but find the bottom, braves the brook.
No man omits precaution, quite neglects
Secrecy, safety, schemes not how retreat,
Having schemed he might advance. Did I so scheme?
Why, with a warrant which 'tis ask and have,
With horse thereby made mine without a word,
I had gained the frontier and slept safe that night.
Then, my companions,—call them what you please,
Slave or stipendiary,—what need of one
To me whose right-hand did its owner's work?
Hire an assassin yet expose yourself?
As well buy glove and then thrust naked hand
I' the thorn-bush. No, the wise man stays at home,
Sends only agents out, with pay to earn:
At home, when they come back,—he straight discards
Or else disowns. Why use such tools at all
When a man's foes are of his house, like mine,
Sit at his board, sleep in his bed? Why noise,
When there's the acquetta[42] and the silent way?
Clearly my life was valueless.

11. But now
Health is returned, and sanity of soul
Nowise indifferent to the body's harm.
I find the instinct bids me save my life;
My wits, too, rally round me; I pick up
And use the arms that strewed the ground before,
Unnoticed or spurned aside: I take my stand,
Make no defence. God shall not lose a life
May do Him further service, while I speak
And you hear, you my judges and last hope!
You are the law: 'tis to the law I look.
I began life by hanging to the law,

[42] A colorless poison.

To the law it is I hang till life shall end.
—I claim law—
Cry, by the higher law whereof your law
O' the land is humbly representative,—
Cry, on what point is it, where either accuse,
I fail to furnish you defence? I stand
Acquitted, actually or virtually,
By every intermediate kind of court
That takes account of right or wrong in man,
Each unit in the series that begins
With God's throne, ends with the tribunal here.
God breathes, not speaks, his verdicts, felt not heard,
Passed on successively to each court I call
Man's conscience, custom, manners, all that make
More and more effort to promulgate, mark
God's verdict in determinable words,
Till last come human jurists—solidify
Fluid result,—what's fixable lies forged,
Statute,—the residue escapes in fume,
Yet hangs aloft, a cloud, as palpable
To the finer sense as word the legist welds.
Justinian's Pandects only make precise
What simply sparkled in men's eyes before,
Twitched in their brow or quivered on their lip,
Waited the speech they called but would not come.[43]

These courts then, whose decree your own confirms,—
Take my whole life, not this last act alone,
Look on it by the light reflected thence!
What has Society to charge me with?
Come, unreservedly,—favour nor fear,—
I am Guido Franceschini, am I not?
You know the courses I was free to take?
I took just that which let me serve the Church,
I gave it all my labour in body and soul

[43] Statute laws are but man's imperfect expression of God's higher law, or right.

Till these broke down i' the service.
Then comes the marriage itself—no question, lords,
Of the entire validity of that!
In the extremity of distress, 'tis true,
For after-reasons, furnished abundantly,
I wished the thing invalid, went to you
Only some months since, set you duly forth
My wrong and prayed your remedy, that a cheat
Should not have force to cheat my whole life long.
"Annul a marriage? 'Tis impossible!
Though ring about your neck be brass not gold,
Needs must it clasp, gangrene you all the same!"[44]

Well, let me have the benefit, just so far,
O' the fact announced,—my wife then is my wife,
I have allowance for a husband's right.
I am charged with passing right's due bound,—such acts
As I thought just, my wife called cruelty,
Complained of in due form,—took her wrongs—
To the town's top, jurisdiction's pride of place,
To the Archbishop and the Governor.
These heard her charge with my reply, and found
That futile, this sufficient: they dismissed
The hysteric querulous rebel, and confirmed
Authority in its wholesome exercise,
They, with directest access to the facts.
"—Ay, for it was their friendship favoured you,
Hereditary alliance against a breach
I' the social order: prejudice for the name
Of Franceschini!"—So I hear it said:
But not here. You, lords, never will you say:
"Two dignitaries, each in his degree
First, foremost, this the spiritual head, and that
The secular arm o' the body politic,
Should, for mere wrongs' love and injustice' sake,
Side with, aid and abet in cruelty

[44] Wear into and rot the flesh.

This broken beggarly noble,—bribed perhaps
By his watered wine and mouldy crust of bread—
Rather than that sweet tremulous flower-like wife
Who kissed their hands and curled about their feet
Looking the irresistible loveliness
In tears that takes man captive."

Then I proceed a step, come with clean hands
Thus far, re-tell the tale told eight months since.
The wife, you allow so far, I have not wronged,
Has fled my roof, plundered me and decamped
In company with the priest her paramour:
And I gave chase, came up with, caught the two
At the wayside inn where both had spent the night,
Found them in flagrant fault, and found as well,
By documents with name and plan and date,
Their intercourse a long established crime.
I did not take the license law's self gives
To slay both criminal o' the spot at the time,
But held my hand,—preferred play prodigy
Of patience which the world calls cowardice,
Rather than seem anticipate the law
And cast discredit on its organs,—you—
So, to your bar I brought both criminals,
And made my statement: heard their counter-charge
Nay,—their corroboration of my tale.

You were to judge between us; so you did.
"Guilty" is the decision of the court,
And that I stand in consequence untouched,
One white integrity from head to heel.
Not guilty? Why then did you punish them?
True, punishment has been inadequate—
'Tis not I only, not my friends that joke,
My foes that jeer, who echo "inadequate"—
For, by a chance that comes to help for once,
The same case simultaneously was judged

At Arezzo, in the province of the Court
Where the crime had beginning but not end.
They then, deciding on but half o' the crime,
The effraction, robbery,—features of the fault
I never cared to dwell upon at Rome,—
What was it they adjudged as penalty
To Pompilia,—the one criminal o' the pair
Amenable to their judgment, not the priest
Who is Rome's? Why, just imprisonment for life
I' the Stinche. There was Tuscany's award
To a wife that robs her husband: you at Rome
Having to deal with adultery in a wife
And, in a priest, breach of the priestly vow,
Give gentle sequestration for a month
In a manageable Convent, then release,
You call imprisonment, in the very house
O' the very couple, the sole aim and end
Of the culprits' crime was—there to reach and rest
And there take solace and defy me: well,—
This difference 'twixt their penalty and yours
Is immaterial: make your penalty less—
Merely that she should henceforth wear black gloves
And white fan, she who wore the opposite—
Why, all the same the fact o' the thing subsists.
Punished, though
By a pin-point scratch, means guilty: guilty means
—What have I been but innocent hitherto?
Anyhow, here the offence, being punished, ends.

12. Ends?—for you deemed so, did you not, sweet lords?
That cure grew worse disease.
In the process you call "justice done"
All along you have nipped away just inch
By inch the creeping climbing length of plague
Breaking my tree of life from root to branch,
And left me, after all and every act
Of your interference,—lightened of what load?

At liberty wherein? Mere words and wind!
"Now I was saved, now I should feel no more
The hot breath, find a respite from fixed eye
And vibrant tongue!" Why, scarce your back was turned,
There was the reptile, that feigned death at first,
Renewing its detested spire and spire
Around me, rising to such heights of hate
That, so far from mere purpose now to crush
And coil itself on the remains of me,
Body and mind, and there flesh fang content,
Its aim is now to evoke life from death,
Make me anew, satisfy in my son
The hunger I may feed but never sate,
Tormented on to perpetuity,—
My son, whom, dead, I shall know, understand,
Feel, hear, see, never more escape the sight
In heaven that's turned to hell, or hell returned
(So, rather, say) to this same earth again,—
Moulded into the image and made one,
Fashioned of soul as featured like in face,
First taught to laugh and lisp and stand and go
By that thief, poisoner, and adulteress
I call Pompilia, he calls . . . . sacred name,
Be unpronounced, be unpolluted here!
And last led up to the glory and prize of hate
By his . . . . foster-father, Caponsacchi's self.
The perjured priest, pink of conspirators,
Tricksters and knaves, yet polished, superfine,
Manhood to model adolescence by.

Lords, look on me, declare,—when, what I show,
Is nothing more nor less than what you deemed
And doled me out for justice,—what did you say?
For reparation, restitution and more,—
Will you not thank, praise, bid me to your breasts
For having done the thing you thought to do,
And thoroughly trampled out sin's life at last?

I have carried into effect your mandate here
That else had fallen to ground:
Blackened again, made legible once more
Your own decree, not permanently writ,
Rightly conceived but all too faintly traced,—
It reads efficient, now, comminatory,
A terror to the wicked, answers so
The mood o' the magistrate, the mind of law.

Absolve, then, me, law's mere executant!
Protect your own defender,—save me, Sirs!
Give me my life, give me my liberty,
My good name and my civic rights again!
It would be too fond, too complacent play
Into the hands o' the devil, should we lose
The game here, I for God:

I need that life,
Oh, never fear! I'll find life plenty use
Though it should last five years more, aches and all!
For, first thing, there's the mother's age to help—
Let her come break her heart upon my breast,
Not on the blank stone of my nameless tomb!
Give me—for last, best gift, my son again,
Whom law makes mine,—I take him at your word,
Mine be he, by miraculous mercy, lords!
Let me lift up his youth and innocence
To purify my palace, room by room.
And when, in times made better through your brave
Decision now,—might but Utopia be!—
Rome rife with honest women and strong men,
Manners reformed, old habits back once more,
Customs that recognise the standard worth,—
The wholesome household rule in force again,
Husbands once more God's representative,
Priests no longer men of Belial,
Leading silly women captive,

Then will I set my son at my right hand
And tell his father's story to this point,
Adding "The task seemed superhuman, still
I dared and did it, trusting God and law:
And they approved of me: give praise to both!"
And if, for answer, he shall stoop to kiss
My hand, and peradventure start thereat,[45]—
I engage to smile "That was an accident
I' the necessary process,—just a trip
O' the torture-irons in their search for truth,—
Hardly misfortune, and no fault at all."

GIUSEPPE CAPONSACCHI

Giuseppe Caponsacchi, the young warm-hearted priest who has used his energies to save Pompilia from her husband, and has been relegated for this, has now been called before the court to testify again. Caponsacchi's life has been purified and blessed by his service to Pompilia. He has a sacred-like love for her that he does not try to hide from the court, now that Pompilia is dying. This love lifts him above his office of priest to a divine sympathy with human need and a hatred of wrong. Caponsacchi's regret that he did not kill Guido when he had the provocation raises the interesting question of the right or wrong of the impulse to kill. Why was Caponsacchi's impulse to kill better than Count Guido Franceschini's? One cannot help but feel that Caponsacchi's passion and impulse has in it something divine. He speaks to the court with a fearlessness and fire of feeling that seems to strike a sympathetic reponse in our own better natures.

1. Answer you, Sirs? Do I understand aright?
Answer you? Then that means
Tell over twice what I, the first time, told
Six months ago: 'twas here, I do believe,
Fronting you same three in this very room,
I stood and told you: yet now no one laughs,
Who then . . . . nay, dear my lords, but laugh you did,
As good as laugh, what in a judge we style
Laughter—no levity, nothing indecorous, lords!

[45] At sight of ugly scars from the racking.

Only,—I think I apprehend the mood:
There was the blameless shrug, permissible smirk,
The pen's pretence at play with the pursed mouth,
The titter stifled in the hollow palm
Which rubbed the eyebrow and caressed the nose,
When I first told my tale: they meant, you know,
"The sly one, all this we are bound believe!
Well, he can say no other than what he says.
We have been young, too,—come, there's greater guilt!
Let him but decently disembroil himself."
And now you sit as grave, stare as aghast
As if I were a phantom: now 'tis—"Friend,
Collect yourself!"—no laughing matter more —
"Counsel the Court in this extremity,
Tell us again!"—tell that, for telling which,
I got the jocular piece of punishment,
Was sent to lounge a little in the place
Whence now of a sudden here you summon me
To take the intelligence from just—your lips
You, Judge Tommati, who then tittered most,—
That she I helped eight months since to escape
Her husband, is retaken by the same,
Three days ago, if I have seized your sense,—
And that he has butchered her accordingly,
As she foretold and as myself believed,—
And, so foretelling and believing so,
We were punished, both of us, the merry way:
Therefore, tell once again the tale! For what?
Pompilia is only dying while I speak!
Why does the mirth hang fire and miss the smile?
Pompilia is bleeding out her life belike,
Gasping away the latest breath of all,
This minute, while I talk—not while you laugh?

Yet, being sobered now, what is it you ask
By way of explanation? There's the fact!
It seems to fill the universe with sight

And sound,—from the four corners of this earth
Tells itself over, to my sense at least.
But you may want it lower set i' the scale,—
Too vast, too close it clangs in the ear, perhaps;
You'd stand back just to comprehend it more:
Well then, let me, the hollow rock,[1] condense
The voice o' the sea and wind, interpret you
The mystery of this murder. God above!
It is too paltry, such a transference
O' the storm's roar to the cranny of the stone!

This deed, you saw begin—why does its end
Surprise you? Why should the event enforce
The lesson, we ourselves learned, she and I,
From the first o' the fact, and taught you, all in vain?
This Guido from whose throat you took my grasp,
Was this man to be favoured, now, or feared,
Let do his will, or have his will restrained,
In the relation with Pompilia?—say!
Did any other man need interpose
—Oh, though first comer, a priest who fears the world—
Was he bound brave the peril, save the doomed,
Or go on, sing his snatch and pluck his flower,
Keep the straight path[2] and let the victim die?
I held so; you decided otherwise,
Saw no such peril, therefore no such need
To stop song, loosen flower, and leave path: Law,
Law was aware and watching, would suffice,
Wanted no priest's intrusion, palpably
Pretence, too manifest a subterfuge!
Whereupon I, priest, coxcomb, fribble, and fool,
Ensconced me in my corner, thus rebuked,
A kind of culprit, over-zealous hound
Kicked for his pains to kennel; I gave place,

[1] The cave is thought of as reducing the roar of the storm so that it can be heard and understood.

[2] Stick to the church services.

To you, and let the law reign paramount:
I left Pompilia to your watch and ward,
And now you point me—there and thus she lies!

Men, for the last time, what do you want with me?
Is it,—you acknowledge, as it were, a use,
A profit in employing me?—at length
I may conceivably help the august law?
I am free to break the blow, next hawk that swoops
On next dove, nor miss much of good repute?
Or what if this your summons, after all,
Be but the form of mere release, no more,
I have paid enough in person at Civita,
Am free,—what more need I concern me with?
Thank you! I am rehabilitated then,
A very reputable priest. But she—
The glory of life, the beauty of the world,
The splendour of heaven, ... well, Sirs, does no one move?
Do I speak ambiguously? The glory, I say,
And the beauty, I say, and splendour, still say I,
Who, a priest, trained to live my whole life long
On beauty and splendour, solely at their source,
God,—have thus recognised my food in one,
You tell me, is fast dying while we talk,
Pompilia,—how does lenity to me,
Remit one death-bed pang to her? Come, smile!
The proper wink at the hot-headed youth
Who lets his soul show, through transparent words,
The mundane love that's sin and scandal too!
You are all struck acquiescent now, it seems:
It seems the oldest, gravest signor here,
Even the redoubtable Tommati, sits
Chop-fallen,—understands how law might take
Service like mine, of brain and heart and hand,
In good part. Better late than never, law!

2. You understand of a sudden
That I endeavoured to save Pompilia?

You were wrong, you see: that's well to see, though late:
That's all we may expect of man, this side
The grave: his good is—knowing he is bad:
Thus will it be with us when the books ope
And we stand at the bar on judgment-day.
Well then, I have a mind to speak, see cause
To relume the quenched flax[3] by this dreadful light,
Burn my soul out in showing you the truth.
Let me, in heaven's name, use the very snuff
O' the taper in one last spark shall show truth
For a moment, show Pompilia who was true!
Not for her sake, but yours: if she is dead,
Oh, Sirs, she can be loved by none of you
Most or least priestly! Saints, to do us good,
Must be in heaven, I seem to understand:
We never find them saints before, at least.
Be her first prayer then presently for you—
She had done the good to me.

What is all this?
There, I was born, have lived, shall die, a fool!
This is a foolish outset:—might with cause
Give colour to the very lie o' the man,
The murderer,—make as if I loved his wife,
In the way he called love. He is the fool there!
Why, had there been in me the touch of taint,
I had picked up so much of knaves'-policy
As hide it, keep one hand pressed on the place
Suspected of a spot would damn us both.
Or no, not her!—not even if any of you
Dares think that I, i' the face of death, her death
That's in my eyes and ears and brain and heart,
Lie,—if he does, let him! I mean to say,
So he stop there, stay thought from smirching her
The snow-white soul that angels fear to take
Untenderly. But, all the same, I know

[3] The snuffed candle of interest in life.

I too am taintless, and I bare my breast.[4]
You can't think, men as you are, all of you,
But that, to hear thus suddenly such an end
Of such a wonderful white soul, that comes
Of a man and murderer calling the white black,
Must shake me, trouble and disadvantage. Sirs,
Only seventeen!

Why, good and wise you are!
You might at the beginning stop my mouth:
So, none would be to speak for her, that knew.
I talk impertinently, and you bear,
All the same. This it is to have to do
With honest hearts: they easily may err,
But in the main they wish well to the truth.
You are Christians; somehow, no one ever plucked
A rag, even, from the body of the Lord,
To wear and mock with, but, despite himself,
He looked the greater and was the better. Yes,
I shall go on now. Does she need or not
I keep calm? Calm I'll keep as monk that croons
Transcribing battle, earthquake, famine, plague,
From parchment to his cloister's chronicle.
Not one word more from the point now! I begin.

Yes, I am one of your body and a priest.
Also I am a younger son o' the House
Oldest now, greatest once, in my birth-town
Arezzo, I recognise no equal there—
I became a priest:
According to prescription did I live,
—Conformed myself, both read the breviary
And wrote the rhymes, was punctual to my place
I' the Pieve,[5] and as diligent at my post
Where beauty and fashion rule. I throve apace,
Sub-deacon, Canon.

[4] I have nothing to keep back.
[5] His church.

Well, after three or four years of this life,
In prosecution of my calling, I
Found myself at the theatre one night
With a brother Canon, in a mood and mind
Proper enough for the place, amused or no:
When I saw enter, stand, and seat herself
A lady, young, tall, beautiful, strange, and sad.
I was still one stare,
When—"Nay, I'll make her give you back your gaze"—
Said Canon Conti; and at the word he tossed
A paper-twist of comfits to her lap,
And dodged and in a trice was at my back
Nodding from over my shoulder. Then she turned,
Looked our way, smiled the beautiful sad strange smile.
"Is not she fair? 'Tis my new cousin," said he:
"The fellow lurking there i' the black o' the box
Is Guido, the old scapegrace: she's his wife,
Married three years since: how his Countship sulks!
He has brought little back from Rome beside,
After the bragging, bullying. A fair face,
And—they do say—a pocket-full of gold
When he can worry both her parents dead.
I don't go much there, for the chamber's cold
And the coffee pale. I got a turn at first
Paying my duty—I observed they crouched
—The two old frightened family spectres, close
In a corner, each on each like mouse on mouse
I' the cat's cage: ever since, I stay at home.
Hallo, there's Guido, the black, mean, and small;
Bends his brows on us—please to bend your own
On the shapely nether limbs of Light-skirts[6] there
By way of a diversion! I was a fool
To fling the sweetmeats. Prudence, for God's love!
To-morrow I'll make my peace, e'en tell some fib,
Try if I can't find means to take you there."

[6] An actress on the stage.

That night and next day did the gaze endure,
Burnt to my brain, as sunbeam thro' shut eyes,
And not once changed the beautiful sad strange smile.
Sirs, ere the week was out,
I saw and said to myself "Light-skirts hides teeth
Would make a dog sick—
'Tis more amusing to go pace at eve
I' the Duomo[7]—watch the day's last gleam outside
Turn, as into a skirt of God's own robe,
Those lancet-windows' jewelled miracle—
Then go eat the Archbishop's ortolans,
Digest his jokes. Luckily Lent is near:
Lent ended"—I told friends—"I shall go to Rome."

3. One evening I was sitting in a muse
Over the opened Summa, darkened round
By the mid-March twilight, thinking how my life
Had shaken under me—broke short indeed
And showed the gap 'twixt what is, what should be—
And into what abysm the soul may slip,
Thinking moreover . . . . oh, thinking, if you like,
How utterly dissociated was I
A priest and celibate, from the sad strange wife
Of Guido—just as an instance to the point,
Nought more—how I had a whole store of strengths
Eating into my heart, which craved employ,
And she, perhaps, need of a finger's help—
And yet there was no way in the wide world
To stretch out mine and so relieve myself—
How when the page o' the Summa preached its best,
Her smile kept glowing out of it, as to mock
The silence we could break by no one word—
There came a tap without the chamber-door
And a whisper, when I bade who tapped speak out,
And, in obedience to my summons, last
In glided a masked muffled mystery,

[7] The cathedral with its stained-glass windows.

Laid lightly a letter on the opened book,
Then stood with folded arms and foot demure,
Pointing as if to mark the minutes' flight.

I took the letter, read to the effect
That she, I lately flung the comfits to,
Had a warm heart to give me in exchange,
And gave it—loved me and confessed it thus,
And bade me render thanks by word of mouth,
Going that night to such a side o' the house
Where the small terrace overhangs a street
Blind and deserted, not the street in front:
Her husband being away, the surly patch,
At his villa of Vittiano.

"And you?"—I asked:
"What may you be?"—"Count Giudo's kind of maid—
Most of us have two functions in his house.
We all hate him, the lady suffers much,
'Tis just we show compassion, furnish aid,
Specially since her choice is fixed so well.
What answer may I bring to cheer the sweet
Pompilia?"

Then I took a pen and wrote.
"No more of this! That you are fair, I know:
But other thoughts now occupy my mind.
I should not thus have played the insensible
Once on a time. What made you—may one ask—
Marry your hideous husband? 'Twas a fault,
And now you taste the fruit of it. Farewell."
"There!" smiled I as she snatched it and was gone—
"There, let the jealous miscreant—Guido's self,
Whose mean old soul grins through this transparent trick—
Be baulked so far, defrauded of his aim!"

Back next morn brought
The messenger, a second letter in hand.

"You are cruel, why is it you dare not come?
Such virtue is scarce natural to your age:
You must love someone else; I hear you do,
The baron's daughter or the Advocate's wife,
Or both—all's one, would you make me the third—
I take the crumbs from table gratefully
Nor grudge who feasts there. 'Faith, I blush and blaze!
Yet if I break all bounds, there's reason sure,
Are you determinedly bent on Rome?
I am wretched here, a monster tortures me:
Carry me with you! Come and say you will!
Concert this very evening! Do not write!
I am ever at the window of my room
Over the terrace, at the *Ave*. Come!"

I questioned—lifting half the woman's mask
To let her smile loose. "So, you gave my line
To the merry lady?" "She kissed off the wax,
And put what paper was not kissed away,
In her bosom to go burn: but merry, no!
She wept all night when evening brought no friend,
Alone, the unkind missive at her breast;
Writes this second letter?" "Even so!
Then she may peep at vespers forth?—What risk
Do we run o' the husband?"—"Ah—no risk at all!
He is more stupid even than jealous. Ah—
That was the reason? Why, the man's away!
Beside, his bugbear is that friend of yours,
Fat little Canon Conti. He fears him—
How should he dream of you? I told you truth—
He goes to the villa at Vittiano—'tis
The time when Spring-sap rises in the vine—
Spends the night there. And then his wife's a child,
Does he think a child outwits him? A mere child:
Yet so full grown, a dish for any duke.
Don't quarrel longer with such cates, but come!"

I wrote "In vain do you solicit me.
I am a priest: and you are wedded wife,
Whatever kind of brute your husband prove.
I have scruples, in short. Yet should you really show
Sign at the window . . . . but nay, best be good!
My thoughts are elsewhere."—"Take her that!"

And so the missives followed thick and fast
For a month, say—I still came at every turn
On the soft sly adder, endlong 'neath my tread.
I was met i' the street, made sign to in the church,
A slip was found i' the door-sill, scribbled word
'Twixt page and page o' the prayer-book in my piece:
A crumpled thing dropped even before my feet,
Pushed through the blind, above the terrace-rail,
As I passed, by day, the very window once.
And ever my one answer in one tone—
"Go your ways, temptress! Let a priest read, pray,
Unplagued of vain talk, visions not for him!
In the end, you'll have your will and ruin me!"

4. One day a variation: thus I read:
"You have gained little by timidity.
My husband has found out my love at length,
Sees cousin Conti was the stalking-horse,
And you the game he covered, poor fat soul!
My husband is a formidable foe,
Will stick at nothing to destroy you. Stand
Prepared, or better, run till you reach Rome!
I bade you visit me, when the last place
My tyrant would have turned suspicious at,
Or cared to seek you in, was . . . . why say, where?
But now all's changed: beside, the season's past
At the villa—wants the master's eye no more.
Anyhow, I beseech you, stay away
From the window! He might well be posted there."

I wrote—"You raise my courage, or call up
My curiosity, who am but man.
Tell him he owns the palace, not the street
Under—that's his and yours and mine alike.
If it should please me pad the path this eve,
Guido will have two troubles, first to get
Into a rage and then get out again.
Be cautious, though: at the *Ave!*"

You of the court!
When I stood question here and reached this point
O' the narrative—search notes and see and say
If someone did not interpose with smile
And sneer, "And prithee why so confident
That the husband must, of all needs, not the wife,
Fabricate thus—what if the lady loved?
What if she wrote the letters?"

Learned Sir,
If a low-browed verger[8] sidled up
Bringing me, like a blotch, on his prod's point,
A transfixed scorpion, let the reptile writhe,
And then said, "See a thing that Rafael made—
This venom issued from Madonna's mouth!"—
I should reply, "Rather, the soul of you
Has issued from your body, like from like,
By way of the ordure-corner!"

But no less,
I tired of the same black teasing lie
Obtruded thus at every turn
"I will to the window, as he tempts," said I:
"Yes, whom the easy love has failed allure,
This new bait of adventure may—he thinks.
While the imprisoned lady keeps afar,
There will they lie in ambush, heads alert,

[8] A farmer with a live snake held out on a stick.

Kith, kin, and Count mustered to bite my heel.
No mother nor brother viper of the brood
Shall scuttle off without the instructive bruise!"

So, I went: crossed street and street: "The next street's turn,
I stand beneath the terrace, see, above,
The black of the ambush-window."
I began to laugh already—
"Out of the hole you hide in,
Count Guido Franceschini, show yourself!
Hear what a man thinks of a thing like you."

The words lay living on my lip, I made
The one turn more—and there at the window stood,
Framed in its black square length, with lamp in hand,
Pompilia; the same great, grave, griefful air
As stands i' the dusk, on altar that I know,
Left alone with one moonbeam in her cell,
Our Lady of all the Sorrows. Ere I knelt—
Assured myself that she was flesh and blood—
She had looked one look and vanished.

I thought—"Just so:
It was herself, they have set her there to watch—
Stationed to see some wedding-band go by,
On fair pretence that she must bless the bride,
She never dreams they used her for a snare,
And now withdraw the bait has served its turn."
And on my lip again was—"Out with thee,
Guido!" When all at once she re-appeared;
But, this time, on the terrace overhead,
So close above me, she could almost touch
My head if she bent down; and she did bend,
While I stood still as stone, all eye, all ear.
She began—"You have sent me letters, Sir:
I have read none, I can neither read nor write;
But she you gave them to, a woman here,

One of the people in whose power I am,
Partly explained their sense, I think, to me
Obliged to listen while she inculcates
That you, a priest, can dare love me, a wife,
Desire to live or die as I shall bid,
Because you saw my face a single time.
It cannot be she says the thing you mean;
Such wickedness were deadly to us both:
But good true love would help me now so much—
I tell myself, you may mean good and true.
You offer me, I seem to understand,
Because I am in poverty and starve,
Much money, where one piece would save my life.
The silver cup upon the altar-cloth
Is neither yours to give nor mine to take;
But I might take one bit of bread therefrom,
Since I am starving, and return the rest,
Yet do no harm: this is my very case.
That it is only you in the wide world,
Knowing me nor in thought nor word nor deed,
Who, all unprompted save by your own heart,
Come proffering assistance now—were strange
But that my whole life is so strange: as strange
It is, my husband whom I have not wronged
Should hate and harm me. For his own soul's sake,
Hinder the harm!

My case is, I was dwelling happily
At Rome with those dear Comparini, called
Father and mother to me; when at once
I found I had become Count Guido's wife:
Who then, not waiting for a moment, changed
Into a fury of fire, if once he was
Merely a man: his face threw fire at mine,
He laid a hand on me that burned all peace,
All joy, all hope, and last all fear away,
Dipping the bough of life, so pleasant once,

In fire which shrivelled leaf and bud alike,
Burning not only present life but past,
Which you might think was safe beyond his reach.
He reached it, though, since that beloved pair,
My father once, my mother all those years,
That loved me so, now say I dreamed a dream
And bid me wake, henceforth no child of theirs,
Never in all the time their child at all.
Do you understand? I cannot: yet so it is.

5. Take me to Rome!
You go to Rome, the servant makes me hear.
Take me as you would take a dog, I think,
Masterless left for strangers to maltreat:
Take me home like that—leave me in the house
Where the father and the mother are; and soon
They'll come to know and call me by my name,
Their child once more, since child I am, for all
They now forget me, which is the worst o' the dream—
And the way to end dreams is to break them, stand,
Walk, go: then help me to stand, walk and go!
The Governor said the strong should help the weak:
You know how weak the strongest women are.
How could I find my way there by myself?
I cannot even call out, make them hear.

The letter I received this morn,
Said—if the woman spoke your very sense—
You would die for me: I can believe it now:
First of all, you seemed wicked and not good,
In writing me those letters: you came in
Like a thief upon me. I this morning said
In my extremity, entreat the thief!
Try if he have in him no honest touch!
A thief might save me from a murderer.
'Twas a thief said the last kind word to Christ:
Christ took the kindness and forgave the theft:

And so did I prepare what I now say.
But now, that you stand and I see your face,
Though you have never uttered word yet—well, I know,
Here too has been dream-work, delusion too,
And that at no time, you with the eyes here,
Ever intended to do wrong by me,
Nor wrote such letters therefore. It is false,
And you are true, have been true, will be true.
To Rome then—when is it you take me there?
Each minute lost is mortal. When?—I ask."

I answered, "It shall be when it can be.
I will go hence and do your pleasure, find
The sure and speedy means of travel, then
Come back and take you to your friends in Rome.
There wants a carriage, money and the rest—
A day's work by to-morrow at this time.
How shall I see you and assure escape?"

She replied, "Pass, to-morrow at this hour.
If I am at the open window, well:
If I am absent, drop a handkerchief
And walk by! I shall see from where I watch,
And know that all is done. Return next eve,
And next, and so till we can meet and speak!"
"To-morrow at this hour I pass," said I.
She was withdrawn.

Here is another point I bid you pause at.
He not only forged the words for her
But word for me, made letters he called mine:
What I sent, he retained, gave these in place,
All by the mistress-messenger!

Sirs, I have thought sometimes, and thought long and hard.
I have stood before, gone round a serious thing,
Tasked my whole mind to touch and clasp it close,

As I stretch forth my arm to touch this bar.
God and man, and what duty I owe both—
I dare to say I have confronted these
In thought: but no such faculty helped here.
I put forth no thought—powerless, all that night
I paced the city:
I' the grey of dawn it was I found myself
Facing the pillared front o' the Pieve—mine,
My church: it seemed to say for the first time
"But am not I the Bride, the mystic love
O' the Lamb, who took thy plighted troth, my priest,
To fold thy warm heart on my heart of stone
And freeze thee nor unfasten any more?
This is a fleshly woman—let the free
Bestow their life-blood, thou art pulseless now!"
Now, when I found out first that life and death
Are means to an end, that passion uses both,
Now, from the stone lungs sighed the scrannel voice
"Leave that passion, come be dead with me!"
Sirs, I obeyed.

So, I went home. Dawn broke, noon broadened, I
I sat stone-still, let time run over me.
The sun slanted into my room, had reached
The west. I opened book—Aquinas[9] blazed
With one black name only on the white page.
I looked up, saw the sunset: vespers rang:
"She counts the minutes till I keep my word
And come say all is ready. I am a priest.
Duty to God is duty to her: I think
God, who created her, will save her too
Some new way, by one miracle the more,
Without me. Then, prayer may avail perhaps."
I went to my own place i' the Pieve, read
The office: I was back at home again
Sitting i' the dark. "Could she but know—but know

[9] Saint Thomas Aquinas, Italian scholar of the thirteenth century.

That, were there good in this distinct from God's,
Really good as it reached her, though procured
By a sin of mine—I should sin: God forgives."
Again the morning found me. "I will work,
Tie down my foolish thoughts. Thank God so far!
I had saved her from a scandal, stopped the tongues
Had broken else into a cackle and hiss
Around the noble name. Duty is still
Wisdom: I have been wise." So the day wore.

6. At evening—"But, achieving victory,
I must not blink the priest's peculiar part,
Nor shrink to counsel, comfort: priest and friend—
How do we discontinue to be friends?
I will go minister, advise her seek
Help at the source—above all, not despair:
There may be other happier help at hand.
I hope it—wherefore then neglect to say?"

There she stood—leaned there, for a second time,
Over the terrace, looked at me, then spoke:
"Why is it you have suffered me to stay
Breaking my heart two days more than was need?
Why delay help, your own heart yearns to give?
You are again here, in the self-same mind,
I see here, steadfast in the face of you—
You grudge to do no one thing that I ask.
Why then is nothing done? You know my need.
Still, through God's pity on me, there is time
And one day more: shall I be saved or no?"
I answered—"Lady, waste no thought, no word
Even to forgive me! Care for what I care—
Only! Now follow me as I were fate!
Leave this house in the dark to-morrow night,
Just before daybreak—there's new moon this eve—
It sets, and then begins the solid black.
Descend, proceed to the Torrione, step

Over the low dilapidated wall,
Take San Clemente, there's no other gate
Unguarded at the hour: some paces thence
An inn stands; cross to it; I shall be there."

She answered, "If I can but find the way.
But I shall find it. Go now!"

I did go,
Took rapidly the route myself prescribed,
Stopped at Torrione, climbed the ruined place,
Proved that the gate was practicable, reached
The inn, no eye, despite the dark, could miss,
Knocked there and entered, made the host secure:
"With Caponsacchi it is ask and have;
I know my betters. Are you bound for Rome?
I get swift horse and trusty man," said he.

Then I retraced my steps, was found once more
In my own house for the last time:
I know not how the night passed: morning broke:
Presently came my servant. "Sir, this eve—
Do you forget?" I started—"How forget?
What is it you know?"— "With due submission, Sir,
This being last Monday in the month but one
And a vigil, since to-morrow is Saint George,
And feast day, and moreover day for copes,
And Canon Conti now away a month,
And Canon Crispi sour because, forsooth,
You let him sulk in stall and bear the brunt
Of the octave.[10] . . . . Well, Sir, 'tis important."

"True!
Hearken, I have to start for Rome this night.
No word, lest Crispi overboil and burst!
Provide me with a laic dress! Throw dust

[10] Take the burden of chanting the church service.

I' the Canon's eye, stop his tongue's scandal so!
See there's a sword in case of accident."
I knew the knave, the knave knew me.

And thus
Through each familiar hindrance of the day
Did I make steadily for its hour and end—
Felt time's old barrier-growth of right and fit
Give way through all its twines and let me go;
At the dead between midnight and morn,
There was I at the goal, before the gate,
With a tune in the ears, low leading up to loud,
A light in the eyes, faint that would soon be flare,
—Till, at last,
When the ecstatic minute must bring birth,
Began a whiteness in the distance, waxed
Whiter and whiter, near grew and more near,
Till it was she: there did Pompilia come:
The white I saw shine through her was her soul's,
Certainly, for the body was one black,
Black from head down to foot. She did not speak,
Glided into the carriage—so a cloud
Gathers the moon up. "By San Spirito,
To Rome, as if the road burned underneath!
Reach Rome, then hold my head in pledge, I pay
The run and the risk to heart's content!"[11] Just that,
I said—then, in another tick of time,
Sprang, was beside her, she and I alone.

So it began, our flight thro' dusk to clear,
Through day and night and day again to night
Once more, and to last dreadful dawn of all.
Sirs, how should I lie quiet in my grave
Unless you suffer me wring, drop by drop,
My brain dry, make a riddance of the drench
Of minutes with a memory in each,

[11] Rome was a hundred miles away.

Recorded motion, breath or look of hers,
Which poured forth would present you one pure glass,
Mirror you plain—the perfect soul Pompilia? Men,
You must know that a man gets drunk with truth
Stagnant inside him! Oh, they've killed her, Sirs!
Can I be calm?

For the first hour
We both were silent in the night, I know:
Sometimes I did not see nor understand.
Blackness engulfed me—partial stupor, say—
Then I would break way, breathe through the surprise,
And be aware again, and see who sat
In the dark vest with the white face and hands.
I said to myself—"I have caught it, I conceive
The mind o' the mystery: 'tis the way they wake
And wait, two martyrs somewhere in a tomb
Each by each as their blessing was to die;
Some signal they are promised and expect,
When to arise before the trumpet scares:
So, through the whole course of the world they wait
The last day, but so fearless and so safe!"

You know this is not love, Sirs—it is faith,
The feeling that there's God, He reigns and rules
Out of this low world: that is all; no harm!

At times she drew a soft sigh—music seemed
Always to hover just above her lips.
In the determined morning, I first found
Her head erect, her face turned full to me,
Her soul intent on mine through two wide eyes.
I answered them. "You are saved hitherto.
We have passed Perugia—gone round by the wood,
Not through, I seem to think—and opposite
I know Assisi;[12] this is holy ground."

[12] Saint Francis was born at Assisi and founded the Franciscan Order there.

Then she resumed. "How long since we both left
Arezzo?"—"Years—and certain hours beside."

7. It was at. . . .ah, but I forget the names!
'Tis a mere post-house and a hovel or two—
I left the carriage and got bread and wine
And brought it her.—"Does it detain to eat?"
"—They stay perforce, change horses—therefore eat!
We lose no minute: we arrive, be sure!"

She said—I know not where—
"I have heard say
Of some sick body that my mother knew,
'Twas no good sign when in a limb diseased
All the pain suddenly departs—as if
The guardian angel discontinued pain
Because the hope of cure was gone at last:
The limb will not again exert itself,
It needs be pained no longer: so with me,
—My soul whence all the pain is past at once:
All pain must be to work some good in the end.
True, this I feel now, this may be that good,
Pain was because of—otherwise, I fear!"

She said—a long while later in the day,
When I had let the silence be—abrupt—
"Have you a mother?"—"She died, I was born."
"A sister then?"—"No sister."—"Who was it—
What woman were you used to serve this way,
Be kind to, till I called you and you came?"
I did not like that word.

At eve we heard the angelus: she turned—
"I told you I can neither read nor write.
My life stopped with the play-time; I will learn,
If I begin to live again: but you—
Who are a priest—wherefore do you not read

The service at this hour? Read Gabriel's song,
The lesson, and then read the little prayer
To Raphael, proper for us travellers!"
I did not like that, neither, but I read.

When we stopped at Foligno it was dark.
The people of the post came out with lights:
The driver said, "This time to-morrow, may
Saints only help, relays continue good,
Nor robbers hinder, we arrive at Rome."
I urged—"Why tax your strength a second night?
Trust me, alight here and take brief repose!
We are out of harm's reach, past pursuit: go sleep
If but an hour! I keep watch, guard the while
Here in the doorway." But her whole face changed,
The misery grew again about her mouth,
The eyes burned up from faintness, like the fawn's
Tired to death in the thicket, when she feels
The probing spear o' the huntsman. "Oh, no stay!"
She cried, in the fawn's cry, "On to Rome, on, on—
Unless 'tis you who fear—which cannot be!"

We did go on all night; but at its close
She was troubled, restless, moaned low, talked at whiles
To herself, her brow on quiver with the dream:
Once, wide awake, she menaced, at arms' length
Waved away something—"Never again with you!
My soul is mine, my body is my soul's:
You and I are divided ever more
In soul and body: get you gone!" Then I—
"Why, in my whole life I have never prayed!
Oh, if the God, that only can, would help!
Am I his priest with power to cast out fiends?
Let God arise and all his enemies
Be scattered!" By morn, there was peace, no sigh
Out of the deep sleep.

When she woke at last,
I answered the first look—"Scarce twelve hours more,
Then, Rome! There probably was no pursuit,
There cannot now be peril: bear up brave!
Just some twelve hours to press through to the prize—
Then, no more of the terrible journey!" "Then,
No more o' the journey: if it might but last!
Always, my life-long, thus to journey still!
It is the interruption that I dread—
With no dread, ever to be here and thus!
Never to see a face nor hear a voice!
Yours is no voice; you speak when you are dumb
Nor face, I see it in the dark. I want
No face nor voice that change and grow unkind."
That I liked, that was the best thing she said.

In the broad day, I dared entreat, "Descend!"
I told a woman, at the garden-gate
By the post-house, white and pleasant in the sun,
"It is my sister—talk with her apart!
She is married and unhappy, you perceive;
I take her home because her head is hurt;
Comfort her as you women understand!"
So, there I left them by the garden-wall,
Paced the road, then bade put the horses to,
Came back, and there she sat: close to her knee,
A black-eyed child still held the bowl of milk,
Wondered to see how little she could drink,
And in her arms the woman's infant lay.
She smiled at me "How much good this has done!
This is a whole night's rest and how much more!
I can proceed now, though I wish to stay.
Take the babe away from me and let me go!"
And in the carriage, "Still a day, my friend;
And perhaps half a night, the woman fears.
I pray it finish since it cannot last.

There may be more misfortune at the close,
And where will you be? God suffice me then!"

Day wore
We passed the places, somehow the calm went,
Again the restless eyes began to rove:
She wandered in her mind—I grew alarmed,
Bade drive and drive, nor any stopping more.
"Too deep i' the thick of the struggle, struggle through!
Then drench her in repose though death's self pour
The plenitude of quiet—help us, God,
Whom the winds carry!"

Suddenly I saw
The old tower, and the little white-walled clump
Of buildings and the cypress-tree or two—
"Already Castelnuovo—Rome!" I cried,
"As good as Rome—Rome is the next stage, think!
This is where travellers' hearts are wont to beat.
Say you are saved, sweet lady!" Up she woke.
The sky was fierce with colour from the sun
Setting. She screamed out "No, I must not die!
Take me no farther, I should die: stay here!
I have more life to save than mine!"[13]

She swooned.
We seemed safe: what was it foreboded so?
Out of the coach into the inn I bore
The motionless and breathless pure and pale
Pompilia—bore her through a pitying group
And laid her on a couch, still calm and cured
By deep sleep of all woes at once. The host
Was urgent "Let her stay an hour or two!
Leave her to us, all will be right by morn!"
Oh, my foreboding! But I could not choose.

[13] The life of her unborn child.

8. I paced the passage, kept watch all night long.
I listened—not one movement, not one sigh.
"Fear not: she sleeps so sound!" they said—but I
Feared, all the same, kept fearing more and more,
Found myself throb with fear from head to foot,
Filled with a sense of such impending woe,
That, at first pause of night, pretence of grey,
I made my mind up it was morn.—"Reach Rome,
Lest hell reach her! A dozen miles to make,
Another long breath, and we emerge!" I stood
I' the court-yard, roused the sleepy grooms. "Have out
Carriage and horse, give haste, take gold!"—said I.
While they made ready in the doubtful morn—
'Twas the last minute—needs must I ascend
And break her sleep; I turned to go.

And there
Faced me Count Guido, there posed the mean man
As master—took the field, encamped his rights,
Challenged the world: there leered new triumph, there
Scowled the old malice in the visage bad
And black o' the scamp. Soon triumph suppled the tongue
A little, malice glued to his dry throat,
And he part howled, part hissed . . . . oh, how he kept
Well out o' the way, at arm's length and to spare!—
"My salutation to your priestship! What?
Matutinal,[14] busy with book so soon
Of an April day that's damp as tears that now
Deluge Arezzo at its darling's flight?—
'Tis unfair, wrongs feminity at large,
To let a single dame monopolize
A heart the whole sex claims,[15] should share alike:
Therefore I overtake you, Canon! Come!
The lady—could you leave her side so soon?
You have not yet experienced at her hands

[14] At morning prayers?

[15] A priest's heart belongs to all women.

My treatment, you lay down undrugged, I see!
Hence this alertness—hence no death-in-life
Like what held arms fast when she stole from mine.
To be sure, you took the solace and repose
That first night at Foligno!—news abound
O' the road by this time—men regaled me much,
As past them I came halting after you,
Vulcan pursuing Mars, as poets sing—
Still at the last here pant I, but arrive.
Enough of fooling: capture the culprits, friend!
Here is the lover in the smart disguise
With the sword—he is a priest, so mine lies still:
There upstairs hides my wife the runaway,
His leman: the two plotted, poisoned first,
Plundered me after, and eloped thus far
Where now you find them. Do your duty quick!
Arrest and hold him! That's done: now catch her!"

During this speech of that man—well, I stood
Away, as he managed—still I stood as near
The throat of him—with these two hands, my own—
As now I stand near yours, Sir—one quick spring,
One great good satisfying gripe, and lo!
There had he lain abolished with his lie,
Creation purged o' the miscreate, man redeemed,
A spittle wiped off from the face of God!

I, in some measure, seek a poor excuse
For what I left undone, in just this fact
That my first feeling at the speech I quote
Was—not of what a blasphemy was dared,
Not what a bag of venomed purulence
Was split and noisome—but how splendidly
Mirthful, how ludicrous a lie was launched!
Oh, she poisoned him,
Plundered him, and the rest! Well, what I wished
Was, that he would but go on, say once more

So to the world, and get his meed of men,
The fist's reply to the filth.

And while I mused,
The minute, oh the misery, was gone!
On either idle hand of me there stood
Really an officer, nor laughed i' the least.
"And now, catch her!"—he cried.

That sobered me. "Let myself lead the way—
Ere you arrest me, who am somebody,
And, as you hear, a priest and privileged—
To the lady's chamber! I presume you—men
Expert, instructed how to find out truth,
Familiar with the guise of guilt. Detect
Guilt on her face when it meets mine, then judge
Between us and the mad dog howling there!"

Up we all went together, in they broke
O' the chamber late my chapel. There she lay,
Composed as when I laid her, that last eve,
O' the couch, still breathless, motionless, sleep's self,
Wax-white, seraphic, saturate with the sun
O' the morning that now flooded from the front
And filled the window with a light like blood.
"Behold the poisoner, the adulteress,
—And feigning sleep too! Seize, bind!"—Guido hissed.

She started up, stood erect, face to face
With the husband: back he fell, was buttressed there
By the window all a-flame with morning-red,
He the black figure, the opprobrious blur
Against all peace and joy and light and life.
"Away from between me and hell!"—she cried:
"Hell for me, no embracing any more!
I am God's, I love God, God—whose knees I clasp,

Whose utterly most just award I take,
But bear no more love-making devils: hence!"

I may have made an effort to reach her side
From where I stood i' the door-way—anyhow
I found the arms I wanted, pinioned fast,
Was powerless in the clutch to left and right
O' the rabble pouring in, rascality
Enlisted, rampant on the side of hearth,
Home, and the husband—pay in prospect too!
They heaped themselves upon me—"Ha!—and him
Also you outrage? Him, too, my sole friend,
Guardian, and saviour? That I baulk you of,
Since—see how God can help at last and worst!"
She sprung at the sword that hung beside him, seized,
Drew, brandished it, the sunrise burned for joy
O' the blade, "Die," cried she, "devil, in God's name!"
Ah, but they all closed round her, twelve to one,
—The unmanly men, no woman-mother made,
Spawned somehow! Dead-white and disarmed she lay.
No matter for the sword, her word sufficed
To spike the coward through and through: he shook,
Could only spit between the teeth—"You see?
You hear? Bear witness, then! Write down . . . . but, no—
Carry these criminals to the prison-house,
For first thing! I begin my search meanwhile
After the stolen effects, gold, jewels, plate,
Money, and clothes, they robbed me of and fled:
With no few amorous pieces, verse and prose,
I have much reason to expect to find."

I took the truth in, guessed sufficiently
The service for the moment—"What I say,
Slight at your peril! We are aliens here,
My adversary and I, called noble both;
I am the nobler, and a name men know.
I could refer our cause to our own court

In our own country, but prefer appeal
To the nearer jurisdiction. Being a priest,
Though in a secular garb—for reasons good
I shall adduce in due time to my peers—
I demand that the Church I serve, decide
Between us, right the slandered lady there.
A Tuscan noble, I might claim the Duke:
A priest, I rather choose the Church—bid Rome
Cover the wronged with her inviolate shield."

9. There was no refusing this: they bore me off,
They bore her off, to separate cells o' the same
Ignoble prison, and, separate, thence to Rome.
Pompilia's face, then and thus, looked on me
The last time in this life: not one sight since,
Never another sight to be! And yet
I thought I had saved her. I appealed to Rome:
It seems I simply sent her to her death.
You tell me she is dying now, or dead;
I cannot bring myself to quite believe
This is a place you torture people in:
What if this your intelligence were just
A subtlety, an honest wile to work
On a man at unawares? 'Twere worthy you.
No, Sirs, I cannot have the lady dead!
That erect form, flashing brow, fulgurant eye,
That voice immortal (oh, that voice of hers!)
Come, let me see her—indeed
It is my duty, being a priest: I hope
I stand confessed, established, proved a priest?
My punishment had motive that, a priest
I, in a laic garb, a mundane mode,
Did what were harmlessly done otherwise.
I never touched her with my finger-tip
Except to carry her to the couch, that eve,
Against my heart, beneath my head, bowed low,

As we priests carry the paten:[16] that is why
—To get leave and go see her of your grace—
I have told you this whole story over again.
Do I deserve grace?
I was chained fast at Civita hand and foot—
She had only you to trust to, you and Rome,
Rome and the Church, and no pert meddling priest
Two days ago, when Guido, with the right,
Hacked her to pieces. One might well be wroth;
I have been patient, done my best to help:
I come from Civita and punishment
As a friend of the court—and for pure friendship's sake
Have told my tale to the end—nay, not the end—
For, wait—I'll end—not leave you that excuse!

When we were parted—shall I go on there?
I was presently brought to Rome—yes, here I stood
Opposite yonder very crucifix—
And there sat you and you, Sirs, quite the same,
I heard charge, and bore question, and told tale
Noted down in the book there—turn and see
If, by one jot or tittle, I vary now!
I showed you how it came to be my part
To save the lady. Then your clerk produced
Papers, a pack of stupid and impure
Banalities called letters about love—
Love, indeed—I could teach who styled them so,
Better, I think, though priest and loveless both!
Could you fail read this cartulary aright
On head and front of Franceschini there,
Large-lettered like hell's masterpiece of print—
That he, from the beginning pricked at heart
By some lust, letch of hate against his wife,
Plotted to plague her into overt sin
And shame, would slay Pompilia body and soul,

[16] The plate with consecrated bread for the Lord's Supper. Caponsacchi reverenced Pompilia.

And save his mean self—miserably caught
I' the quagmire of his own tricks, cheats, and lies?
—That himself wrote those papers—from himself
To himself—which, i' the name of me and her,
His mistress-messenger gave her and me,
Touching us with such pustules of the soul
That she and I might take the taint, be shown
To the world and shuddered over, speckled so?
Had the liar's lie been true one pin-point speck,
Were I the accepted suitor, free o' the place,
Disposer of the time, to come at a call
And go at a wink as who should say me nay—
What need of flight, what were the gain therefrom
But just damnation, failure or success?
Damnation pure and simple to her the wife
And me the priest—who bartered private bliss
For public reprobation, the safe shade
For the sunshine which men see to pelt me by:
What other advantage—we who led the days
And night alone i' the house—was flight to find?
In our whole journey did we stop an hour,
Diverge a foot from strait road till we reached
Or would have reached—but for that fate of ours—
The father and mother, in the eye of Rome.
And indeed you did so far give sanction to our flight,
Confirm its purpose, as lend helping hand,
Deliver up Pompilia not to him
She fled, but those the flight was ventured for.
Why then could you, who stopped short, not go on
One poor step more, and justify the means,
Having allowed the end?—

I have done with being judged.
I stand here guiltless in thought, word and deed,
To the point that I apprise you,—
That I assuredly did bow, was blessed

By the revelation of Pompilia. There!
Such is the final fact I fling you, Sirs,
To mouth and mumble and misinterpret: there!
"The priest's in love," have it the vulgar way!
Unpriest me, rend the rags o' the vestment, do—
Degrade deep, disenfranchise all you dare—
Remove me from the midst, no longer priest
And fit companion for the like of you—
Your gay Abati with the well-turned leg
And rose i' the hat-rim, Canons, cross at neck
And silk mask in the pocket of the gown,[17]
Brisk bishops with the world's musk still unbrushed
From the rochet; I'll no more of these good things:
There's a crack somewhere, something that's unsound
I' the rattle!

10. For Pompilia—be advised,
Build churches, go pray! You will find me there,
I know, if you come—and you will come, I know.
Why, there's a Judge weeping! Did not I say
You were good and true at bottom? You see the truth—
I am glad I helped you: she helped me just so.

But for Count Guido—you must counsel there!
I bow my head, bend to the very dust,
Break myself up in shame of faultiness.
I had him one whole moment, as I said—
As I remember, as will never out
O' the thoughts of me—I had him in arm's reach
There—as you stand, Sir, now you cease to sit—
I could have killed him ere he killed his wife,
And did not: he went off alive and well
And then effected this last feat—through me!
Me—not through you—dismiss that fear! 'Twas you
Hindered me staying here to save her.

[17] Ready to mask themselves at a street carnival.

I conceive—
In all due self-abasement might I speak—
How you will deal with Guido: oh, not death!
Death, if it let her life be: otherwise
Not death—your lights will teach you clearer. I
Certainly have an instinct of my own
I' the matter: bear with me and weigh its worth!
Let us go away—leave Guido all alone
Back on the world again that knows him now!
I think he will be found (indulge so far!)
Not to die so much as slide out of life,
Pushed by the general horror and common hate
Low, lower—left o' the very ledge of things,
I seem to see him catch convulsively
One by one at all honest forms of life,
At reason, order, decency, and use—
To cramp him and get foothold by at least;
And still they disengage them from his clutch.
"What, you are he, then, had Pompilia once
And so forwent her? Take not up with us!"
And thus I see him slowly and surely edged
Off all the table-land whence life upsprings
Aspiring to be immortality,
As the snake, hatched on hill-top by mischance,
Despite his wriggling, slips, slides, slidders down
Hill-side, lies low and prostrate on the smooth
Level of the outer place, lapsed in the vale:
So I lose Guido in the loneliness,
Silence and dusk, till at creation's verge,
Lo, what is this he meets,
What other man deep further in the fate,
Who, turning at the prize of a footfall
To flatter him and promise fellowship,
Discovers in the act a frightful face—
Judas, made monstrous by much solitude!
The two are at one now! Let them love their love
That bites and claws like hate, or hate their hate

That mops and mows and makes as it were love!
There, let them each tear each in devil's-fun,
Or fondle this the other while malice aches—
Both teach, both learn detestability!
Kiss him the kiss, Iscariot! Pay that back,
That snatch o' the slaver blistering your lip—
By the better trick, the insult he spared Christ—
Lick him o'er slimy-smooth with jelly-filth
O' the verse-and-prose pollution in love's guise!
The cockatrice is with the basilisk!
There let them grapple, denizens o' the dark,
Out of the ken of God
Or care of man, for ever and ever more!

Why, Sirs, what's this? Why, this is sorry and strange!—
Futility, divagation: this from me
Bound to be rational, justify an act
Of sober man—ineffective help!
A poor rash advocate I prove myself.
My part was just to tell you how things stand,
State facts and not be flustered at their fume.

Sirs, I am quiet again.
Forget distemperature and idle heat!
Pompilia will be presently with God;
I am, on earth, as good as out of it,
A relegated priest; when exile ends,
I mean to do my duty and live long.
She and I are mere strangers now: but priests
Should study passion; how else cure mankind,
Who come for help in passionate extremes?
To have to do with nothing but the true,
The good, the eternal—
To learn not only by a comet's rush
But a rose's birth—not by the grandeur, God—
But the comfort, Christ—all this, how far away!

Mere delectation, meet for a minute's dream!—[18]
Just as a drudging student trims his lamp,
Opens his Plutarch, puts him in the place
Of Roman, Grecian; draws the patch'd gown close,
Dreams, "Thus should I fight, save or rule the world!"—
Then smilingly, contentedly, awakes
To the old solitary nothingness.
So I, from such communion, pass content. . . . .
O great, just, good God! Miserable me!

POMPILIA

On her death bed Pompilia tells the story of her life.

1. "I am just seventeen years and five months old,
And, if I lived one day more, three full weeks;
'Tis writ so in the church's register,
Lorenzo in Lucina, all my names
At length, so many names for one poor child,
—Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
Pompilia Comparini—laughable!
Also 'tis writ that I was married there
Four years ago; and they will add, I hope,
When they insert my death,
That I had been a mother of a son
Exactly two weeks.

This Lorenzo seems
My own particular place, I always say.
I used to wonder, when I stood scarce high
As the bed here, what the marble lion meant,
With half his body rushing from the wall,
Eating the figure of a prostrate man—
An ominous sign to one baptised like me,
Married, and to be buried there, I hope.

The surgeon cared for me,
To count my wounds—twenty-two dagger wounds,

[18] Theoretical beauty and goodness are relatively valueless unless applied to human needs.

Five deadly, but I do not suffer much—
Or too much pain—and am to die to-night.

Oh how good God is that my babe was born,
Better than born, baptised and hid away
Before this happened, safe from being hurt!
That had been sin God could not well forgive:
He was too young to smile and save himself.
When they took, two days after he was born,
My babe away from me to be baptised
And hidden awhile, for fear his foe should find—
The country-woman, used to nursing babes,
Said "Why take on so? where is the great loss?
These next three weeks he will but sleep and feed,
Only begin to smile at the month's end;
He would not know you, if you kept him here,
Sooner than that; so, spend three merry weeks
Snug in the Villa, getting strong and stout,
And then I bring him back to be your own,
And both of you may steal to—we know where!"
The month—there wants of it two weeks this day!
Still, I half fancied when I heard the knock
At the Villa in the dusk, it might prove she—
Come to say "Since he smiles before the time,
Why should I cheat you out of one good hour?
Back I have brought him; speak to him and judge."

Now I shall never see him; what is worse,
When he grows up and gets to be my age,
He will seem hardly more than a great boy;
And if he asks "What was my mother like?"
People may answer "Like girls of seventeen"—
And how can he but think of this and that,
Lucias, Marias, Sofias, who titter or blush
When he regards them as such boys may do?
Therefore I wish some one will please to say
I looked already old though I was young;

How happy those are who know how to write!
Such could write what their son should read in time,
Had they a whole day to live out like me.
I hope he will regard
The history of me as what someone dreamed,
And get to disbelieve it at the last:
Since to myself it dwindles fast to that,
Sheer dreaming and impossibility—
Just in four days too! All the seventeen years,
Not once did a suspicion visit me ·
How very different a lot is mine
From any other woman's in the world.
The reason must be, 'twas by step and step
It got to grow so terrible and strange:
These strange woes stole on tiptoe, as it were,
Into my neighbourhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I lay;
And I was found familiarised with fear,
When friends broke in, held up a torch and cried
"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,
How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?
And the soft length—lies in and out your feet
And laps you round the knee—a snake it is!"
And so on.

Well, and they are right enough,
By the torch they hold up now; for first, observe,
I never had a father—no, nor yet,
A mother: my own boy can say at least
"I had a mother whom I kept two weeks!"
Not I, who little used to doubt . . . . *I* doubt
Good Pietro, kind Violante, gave me birth?
They loved me always as I love my babe
(—Nearly so, that is—quite so it could not be—)
Did for me all I meant to do for him,
Till one surprising day, three years ago,

They both declared, at Rome, before some judge
In some court where the people flocked to hear,
That really I had never been their child,
Was a mere castaway, the careless crime
Of an unknown man, the crime and care too much
Of a woman known too well.
You know what they declared.

So with my husband—just such a surprise,
Such a mistake, in that relationship!
Everyone says that husbands love their wives,
Guard them and guide them, give them happiness;
'Tis duty, law, pleasure, religion: well,
You see how much of this comes true in mine!
People indeed would fain have somehow proved
He was no husband: but he did not hear,
Or would not wait, and so has killed us all.

When I was a mere child, my mother . . . . that's
Violante, you must let me call her so
Nor waste time trying, to unlearn the word . . . .
She brought a neighbor's child of my own age
To play with me of rainy afternoons;
And, since there hung a tapestry on the wall,
We two agreed to find each other out
Among the figures. "Tisbe, that is you,
With half-moon on your hair-knot, spear in hand,
Flying, but no wings, only the great scarf
Blown to a bluish rainbow at your back:
Call off your hound and leave the stag alone!"
"—And there are you, Pompilia, such green leaves
Flourishing out of your five finger-ends,
And all the rest of you so brown and rough:
Why is it you are turned a sort of tree?"
You know the figures never were ourselves
Though we nicknamed them so. Thus, all my life—
Looks old, fantastic and impossible:

I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades.
—Even to my babe! I thought, when he was born,
Something began for once that would not end,
Nor change into a laugh at me, but stay
For evermore, eternally quite mine.
Well, so he is,—but yet they bore him off,
The third day, lest my husband should lay traps
And catch him, and by means of him catch me.
Since they have saved him so, it was well done:
Yet thence comes such confusion of what was
With what will be,—that late seems long ago,
And, what years should bring round, already come,
Till even he withdraws into a dream
As the rest do: I fancy him grown great,
Strong, stern, a tall young man who tutors me,
Frowns with the others "Poor imprudent child!
Why did you venture out of the safe street?
Why go so far from help to that lone house?
Why open at the whisper and the knock?"

2. Six days ago when it was New Year's-day,
We bent above the fire and talked of him,
What he should do when he was grown and great.
Violante, Pietro, each had given the arm
I leant on, to walk by, from couch to chair
And fireside,—laughed, as I lay safe at last,
"Pompilia's march from bed to board is made,
Pompilia back again and with a babe,
Shall one day lend his arm and help her walk!"
Then we all wished each other more New Years.
Pietro began to scheme—"Our cause is gained;
The law is stronger than a wicked man:
Let him henceforth go his way, leave us ours!
We will avoid the city, tempt no more
The greedy ones by feasting and parade,—
Live at the other villa, we know where,
Still farther off, and we can watch the babe

Grow fast in the good air; and wood is cheap
And wine sincere outside the city gate.
I still have two or three old friends will grope
Their way along the mere half-mile of road,
With staff and lantern on a moonless night
When one needs talk: they'll find me, never fear,
And I'll find them a flask of the old sort yet!"
Violante said "You chatter like a crow:
Pompilia tires o' the tattle, and shall to-bed:
Do not too much the first day,—somewhat more
To-morrow, and, the next, begin the cape
And hood and coat! I have spun wool enough."
Oh what a happy friendly eve was that!

And, next day, about noon, out Pietro went—
He was so happy and would talk so much,
Until Violante pushed and laughed him forth
Sight-seeing in the cold,—"So much to see
I' the churches! Swathe your throat three times!" she cried,
"And above all, beware the slippery ways,
And bring us all the news by supper-time!"
He came back late, laid by cloak, staff and hat,
Powdered so thick with snow it made us laugh,
Rolled a great log upon the ash o' the hearth,
And bade Violante treat us to a flask,—when, at the door,
A tap: we started up: you know the rest.

Pietro at least had done no harm, I know;
Nor even Violante, so much harm as makes
Such revenge lawful. Certainly she erred—
Did wrong, how shall I dare say otherwise?—
In telling that first falsehood, buying me
From my poor faulty mother at a price,
To pass off upon Pietro as his child.
It proved wrong but seemed right
To poor Violante—for there lay, she said
My poor real dying mother in her rags,

Who put me from her with the life and all,
Poverty, pain, shame and disease at once,
To die the easier by what price I fetched—
Also (I hope) because I should be spared
Sorrow and sin—why may not that have helped?
My father,—he was no one, any one,—
The worse, the likelier,—call him,—he who came,
Was wicked for his pleasure, went his way,
And left no trace to track by; there remained
Nothing but me, the unnecessary life,
To catch up or let fall,—and yet a thing
She could make happy, be made happy with,
This poor Violante,—who would frown thereat?

Well, God, you see! God plants us where we grow.
It is not that, because a bud is born
At a wild briar's end, full i' the wild beast's way,
We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
On the oak-tree top,—say, "There the bud belongs!"
She thought, moreover, real lies were—lies told
For harm's sake; whereas this had good at heart,
Good for my mother, good for me, and good
For Pietro who was meant to love a babe,
And needed one to make his life of use,
Receive his house and land when he should die.
Wrong, wrong and always wrong! how plainly wrong!
For see, this fault kept pricking, as faults do,
All the same at her heart,—this falsehood hatched,
She could not let it go nor keep it fast.
She told me so,—the first time I was found
Locked in her arms once more after the pain,
When the nuns let me leave them and go home,
And both of us cried all the cares away,—
This it was set her on to make amends,
This brought about the marriage—simply this!
Do let me speak for her you blame so much!

When Paul, my husband's brother, found me out,
Heard there was wealth for who should marry me,
So, came and made a speech to ask my hand
For Guido,—she, instead of piercing straight
Through the pretence to the ignoble truth,
Fancied she saw God's very finger point,
Designate just the time for planting me,
(The wild briar-slip she plucked to love and wear)
In soil where I could strike real root, and grow,
And get to be the thing I called myself:
I know she meant all good to me, all pain
To herself,—since how could it be aught but pain,
To give me up, so, from her very breast,
The wilding flower-tree-branch that, all those years,
She had got used to feel for and find fixed?
She meant well: has it been so ill i' the main?
That is but fair to ask: one cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life,
The day that one is dying—sorrows change
Into not altogether sorrow-like;
I do see strangeness but scarce misery,
Now it is over, and no danger more.
My child is safe; there seems not so much pain.
It comes, most like, that I am just absolved,
Purged of the past, the foul in me, washed fair,—
One cannot both have and not have, you know,—
Being right now, I am happy and colour things,
Yes, every body that leaves life sees all
Softened and bettered: so with other sights:
To me at least was never evening yet
But seemed far beautifuller than its day,
For past is past.

3. There was a fancy came,
When somewhere, in the journey with my friend,
We stepped into a hovel to get food;
And there began a yelp here, a bark there,—

Misunderstanding creatures that were wroth
And vexed themselves and us till we retired.
The hovel is life: no matter what dogs bit
Or cats scratched in the hovel I break from,
All outside is lone field, moon and such peace—
Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the white,
Jesus Christ's self,
To meet me and calm all things back again,

Besides, up to my marriage, thirteen years
Were, each day, happy as the day was long:
This may have made the change too terrible.
I know that when Violante told me first
The cavalier,—she meant to bring next morn,
Whom I must also let take, kiss my hand,—
Would be at San Lorenzo the same eve
And marry me,—which over, we should go
Home both of us without him as before,
And, till she bade speak, I must hold my tongue,
Such being the correct way with girl-brides,
From whom one word would make a father blush,—
I know, I say, that when she told me this,
—Well, I no more saw sense in what she said
Than a lamb does in people clipping wool;
Only lay down and let myself be clipped.
And when next day the cavalier who came
Proved Guido Francheschini,—old
And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like the thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching birds,—
And when he took my hand and made a smile—
Why, the uncomfortableness of it all
Seemed hardly more important in the case
Than,—when one gives you, say, a coin to spend,—
Its newness or its oldness; if the piece

Weigh properly and buy you what you wish,
No matter whether you get grime or glare!
Men take the coin, return you grapes and figs.
Here, marriage was the coin, a dirty piece
Would purchase me the praise of those I loved:
About what else should I concern myself?
So, hardly knowing what a husband meant,
I supposed this or any man would serve,
No whit the worse for being so uncouth:
For I was ill once and a doctor came
With a great ugly hat, no plume thereto,
Black jerkin and black buckles and black sword,
And white sharp beard over the ruff in front,
And oh so lean, so sour-faced and austere!—
Who felt my pulse, made me put out my tongue,
Then oped a phial, dripped a drop or two
Of a black bitter something,—I was cured!
What mattered the fierce beard or the grim face?
It was the physic beautified the man.

However, I was hurried through a storm,
Next dark eve of December's deadest day—
How it rained!—
—Cloaked round, covered close,
I was like something strange or contraband,—
Into blank San Lorenzo, up the aisle,
My mother keeping hold of me so tight,
I fancied we were come to see a corpse
Before the altar which she pulled me toward.
There we found waiting an unpleasant priest
Who proved the brother, not our parish friend,
But one with mischief-making mouth and eye,
Paul, whom I know since to my cost. And then
I heard the heavy church-door lock out help
Behind us: for the customary warmth,
Two tapers shivered on the altar. "Quick—
Lose no time!"—cried the priest. And straightway down

From . . . . what's behind the altar where he hid—
Hawk-nose and yellowness and bush and all,
Stepped Guido, caught my hand, and there was I
O' the chancel, and the priest had opened book,
Read here and there, made me say that and this,
And after, told me I was now a wife,
Honoured indeed, since Christ thus weds the Church,
Then the two slipped aside and talked apart.
And I, silent and scared, got down again
And joined my mother who was weeping now.
Nobody seemed to mind us any more,
And both of us on tiptoe found our way
To the door which was unlocked by this, and wide.
When we were in the street, the rain had stopped,
All things looked better. At our own house-door,
Violante whispered "No one syllable
To Pietro! Girl-brides never breathe a word!"
"—Well treated to a wetting, draggle-tails!"
Laughed Pietro as he opened—
What do these priests mean, praying folk to death
On stormy afternoons, with Christmas close
To wash our sins off nor require the rain?"
Violante gave my hand a timely squeeze,
Madonna saved me from immodest speech,
I kissed him and was quiet, being a bride.

When I saw nothing more, the next three weeks,
Of Guido—"Nor the Church sees Christ" thought I.

One morning, as I sat and sang
At the broidery-frame alone i' the chamber,—loud
Voices, two, three together, sobbings too,
And my name, "Guido," "Paolo," flung like stones
From each to the other! In I ran to see.
There stood the very Guido and the priest
With sly face,—formal but nowise afraid,—
While Pietro seemed all red and angry, scarce

Able to stutter out his wrath in words;
And this it was that made my mother sob,
As he reproached her—"You have murdered us,
Me and yourself and this our child beside!"
The Guido interposed "Murdered or not,
Be it enough your child is now my wife!
I claim and come to take her." Paul put in,
"Consider—kinsman, dare I term you so?—
What is the good of your sagacity
Except to counsel in a strait like this?
I guarantee the parties man and wife
Whether you like or loathe it, bless or ban.
May spilt milk be put back within the bowl—
The done thing, undone?"
While fast and faster sobbed Violante—"Ay,
All of us murdered, past averting now!
O my sin, O my secret!" and such like.

4. Then I began to half surmise the truth;
Something had happened, low, mean, underhand,
False, and my mother was to blame, and I
To pity, whom all spoke of, none addressed:
I was the chattel that had caused a crime.
I stood mute,—those who tangled must untie
The embroilment. Pietro cried "Withdraw, my child!
She is not helpful to the sacrifice
At this stage,—do you want the victim by
While you discuss the value of her blood?
For her sake, I consent to hear you talk:
Go, child, and pray God help the innocent!"

I did go and was praying God, when came
Violante, with eyes swollen and red enough,
But movement on her mouth for make-believe
Matters were somehow getting right again.
She bade me sit down by her side and hear.
"You are too young and cannot understand,

Nor did your father understand at first.
I wished to benefit all three of us,
And when he failed to take my meaning,—why,
I tried to have my way at unaware—
Obtained him the advantage he refused. In short,
Yes, he was wrong, your father sees and says;
My scheme was worth attempting: and bears fruit,
Gives you a husband and a noble name,
A palace and no end of pleasant things.
What do you care about a handsome youth?
They are so volatile, and teaze their wives!
This is the kind of man to keep the house.
We lose no daughter,—gain a son, that's all:
For 'tis arranged we never separate,
Nor miss, in our grey time of life, the tints
Of you that colour eve to match with mourn.
In good or ill, we share and share alike,
And cast our lots into a common lap,
And all three die together as we lived!
Only, at Arezzo,—that's a Tuscan town,
Not so large as this noisy Rome, no doubt,
But older far and finer much, say folks,—
In a great palace where you will be queen,
Know the Archbishop and the Governor,
And we see homage done you ere we die.
Therefore, be good and pardon!"—"Pardon what?
You know things, I am very ignorant:
All is right if you only will not cry!"

And so an end! Because a blank begins
From when, at the word, she kissed me hard and hot,
And took me back to where my father leaned
Opposite Guido—who stood eyeing him,
As eyes the butcher the cast panting ox
That feels his fate is come, nor struggles more,—
While Paul looked archly on,

And said "Count Guido, take your lawful wife
Until death part you!"

All since is one blank,
Over and ended; a terrific dream.
It is the good of dreams—so soon they go!
Wake in a horror of heart-beats, you may—
Cry, "The dread thing will never from my thoughts!"
Still, a few daylight doses of plain life,
Cock-crow and sparrow-chirp, or bleat and bell
Of goats that trot by, tinkling, to be milked;
And when you rub your eyes awake and wide,
Where is the harm o' the horror? Gone! So here.
I know I wake,—but from what? Blank, I say!
This is the note of evil: for good lasts.

I am held up, amid the nothingness,
By one or two truths only—thence I hang,
And there I live,—the rest is death or dream,
All but those points of my support. I think
Of what I saw at Rome once in the Square
There was a foreigner had trained a goat,
To climb up, stand straight on a pile of sticks
Put close, which gave the creature room enough:
When she was settled there he, one by one,
Took away all the sticks, left just the four
Whereon the little hoofs did really rest,
There she kept firm, all underneath was air,
So, what I hold by, are my prayer to God,
My hope, that came in answer to the prayer,
Some hand would interpose and save me—hand
Which proved to be my friend's hand: and,—best bliss,—
That fancy which began so faint at first,
That thrill of dawn's suffusion through my dark,
Which I perceive was promise of my child,
The light his unborn face sent long before,—
God's way of breaking the good news to flesh.

Four days ago, when I was sound and well
And like to live, no one would understand.
People were kind, but smiled "And what of him,
Your friend, whose tonsure, the rich dark-brown hides?
There, there!—your lover, do we dream he was?
A priest too—never were such naughtiness!
Still, he thinks many a long think, never fear,
After the shy pale lady,—lay so light
For a moment in his arms, the lucky one!"
And so on: wherefore should I blame you much?
So we are made, such difference in minds,
Such difference too in eyes that see the minds!
That man, you misinterpret and misprise—
The glory of his nature, I had thought,
Shot itself out in white light, blazed the truth
Through every atom of his act with me.
My last breath shall wholly spend itself
In one attempt more to disperse the stain,
About a lustrous and pellucid soul:
So that, when I am gone but sorrow stays,
And people need assurance in their doubt
If God yet have a servant, man a friend,
The weak a saviour and the vile a foe,—
Let him be present, by the name invoked,
Giuseppe-Maria Caponsacchi!

There,
Strength comes already with the utterance!
I will remember once more for his sake
The sorrow: for he lives and is belied.
Could he be here, how he would speak for me!

5. I had been miserable three drear years
In that dread palace and lay passive now,
When I first learned there could be such a man.
Thus it fell: I was at a public play,
In the last days of Carnival last March,

Brought there I knew not why, but now know well.
My husband put me where I sat, in front;
Then crouched down, breathed cold through me from behind,
Stationed i' the shadow,—none in front could see,—
I, it was, faced the stranger-throng beneath
The crowd with upturned faces, eyes one stare,
Voices one buzz.[1] I looked but to the stage,
Whereon two lovers sang and interchanged
"True life is only love, love only bliss:
I love thee—thee I love!" then they embraced.
I looked thence to the ceiling and the walls,—
Over the crowd, those voices and those eyes,—
My thoughts went through the roof and out, to Rome
On wings of music, waft of measured words,—
Set me down there, a happy child again,

Sudden I saw him; into my lap there fell
A foolish twist of comfits, broke my dream
And brought me from the air and laid me low,
As ruined as the soaring bee that's reached
By the dust-handful.[2] There the comfits lay:
I looked to see who flung them, and I faced
This Caponsacchi, looking up in turn.
Ere I could reason out why, I felt sure,
Whoever flung them, his was not the hand,—
Up rose the ground face and good-natured grin
Of him who, in effect had played the prank,
From covert close beside the earnest face,—
Fat waggish Conti, friend of all the world.
He was my husband's cousin, privileged
To throw the thing: the other, silent, grave,
Solemn almost, saw me, as I saw him.

I said "Had there been a man like that,
To lift me with his strength out of all strife

[1] Gossiping about her.
[2] Bees are brought to the ground by throwing dust upon them.

Into the calm, how I could fly and rest![3]
I have a keeper in the garden here
Whose sole employment is to strike me low
If ever I, for solace, seek the sun.
Life means with me successful feigning death,
Lying stone-like, eluding notice so,
Forgoing here the turf and there the sky.
Suppose that man had been instead of this!"

Presently Conti laughed into my ear,
—Had tripped up to the raised place where I sat—
"Cousin, I flung them brutishly and hard!
Because you must be hurt, to look austere
As Caponsacchi yonder, my tall friend
A-gazing now. Ah, Guido, you so close?
Keep on your knees, do! Beg her to forgive!
My cornet battered like a cannon-ball.
Good bye, I'm gone!"—nor waited the reply.

That night at supper, out my husband broke,
"Why was that throwing, that buffoonery?
Do you think I am your dupe? What man would dare
Throw comfits in a stranger lady's lap?
'Twas knowledge of you bred such insolence
In Caponsacchi; he dared shoot the bolt,
Using that Conti for his stalking-horse.
How could you see him this once and no more,
When he is always haunting hereabout
At the street-corner or the palace-side,
Publishing my shame and your impudence?
You are a wanton,—I a dupe, you think?
O Christ, what hinders that I kill her quick?"
Whereat he drew his sword and feigned a thrust.
All this, now,—being not so strange to me,
Used to such misconception day by day
And broken-in to bear,—I bore, this time,

[3] Pompilia was in great need of the sympathy of a strong, good man.

More quietly than woman should perhaps:
Repeated the mere truth and held my tongue.

Then he said, "Since you play the ignorant,
I shall instruct you. This amour,—commenced
Or finished or midway in act, all's one,—
'Tis the town-talk; so my revenge shall be.
Does he presume because he is a priest?
I warn him that the sword I wear shall pink
His lily-scented cassock through and through,
Next time I catch him underneath your eaves!"

But he had threatened with the sword so oft
And, after all, not kept his promise. All
I said was, "Let God save the innocent!
Moreover, death is far from a bad fate.
I shall go pray for you and me, not him;
And then I look to sleep, come death or, worse,
Life." So, I slept.

There may have elapsed a week,
When Margherita,[4] called my waiting-maid,
Whom it is said my husband found too fair—
Who stood and heard the charge and the reply,
Who never once would let the matter rest
From that night forward, but rang changes still
On this the thrust and that the shame, and how
Good cause for jealousy cures jealous fools,
And what a paragon was this same priest
She talked about until I stopped my ears,—
She said, "A week is gone; you comb your hair,
Then go mope in a corner, cheek on palm,
Till night comes round again,—so, waste a week
As if your husband menaced you in sport.
Have not I some acquaintance with his tricks?

[4] Margherita was probably jealous of Pompilia and anxious for Guido to hate her.

Oh no, he did not stab the serving-man
Who made and sang the rhymes about me once!
Nor poisoned he the foreigner, my friend,
Who wagered on the whiteness of my breast,—
But what's here?
A priest, that does not fight, and cannot wed,
Yet must be dealt with! If the Count took fire
For the poor pastime of a minute,—me—
What were the conflagration for yourself,
Countess and lady-wife and all the rest?
The priest will perish; you will grieve too late:
Were it not simple Christian charity
To warn the priest be on his guard,—save him
Assured death, save yourself from causing it?
I meet him in the street. Give me a glove,
A ring to show for token! Mum's the word!"

I answered, "If you were, as styled, my maid,
I would command you: as you are, you say,
My husband's intimate,—assist his wife
Who can do nothing but entreat 'Be still!'
Even if you speak truth and a crime is planned,
Leave help to God as I am forced to do!
There is no other course, or we should craze,
Seeing such evil with no human cure.
Reflect that God, who makes the storm desist,
Can make an angry violent heart subside.
Why should we venture teach Him governance?
Never address me on this subject more!"

6. Next night she said, "But I went, all the same,
—Ay, saw your Caponsacchi in his house,
And come back stuffed with news I must outpour.
I told him, 'Sir, my mistress is a stone:
Why should you harm her for no good you get?
For you do harm her—prowl about our place
With the Count never distant half the street,

Are there not other beauties at your beck?
We all known, Donna This and Monna That
Die for a glance of yours, yet here you gaze!
Go make them grateful, leave the stone its cold!'
And he—oh, he turned first white and then red,
And then—'To her behest I bow myself
Whom I love with my body and my soul:
See, I write
One little word, no harm to see or hear!'
This is what he wrote.
'My idol!' " . . . .

But I took it from her hand
And tore it into shreds. "Why join the rest
Who harm me? Have I ever done you wrong?"
She muttered, "Have your wilful way!" I slept.

Whereupon . . . . no, I leave my husband out!
It is not to do him more hurt, I speak.
Let it suffice, when misery was most,
One day, I swooned and got a respite so.
She stooped as I was slowly coming to,
This Margherita, ever on my trace,
And whispered—"Caponsacchi!"
For the first time, I let her have her will,
Heard passively,—
"Still he writes letters you refuse to hear.
Your husband dashes you against the stones;
This man would place each fragment in a shrine:
You hate him, love your husband!"

I returned,
"It is not true I love my husband,—no,
Nor hate this man. I listen while you speak,
—Assured that what you say is false
All your report of Caponsacchi false,
Folly or dreaming
Get you gone!"

It had got half through April. I arose
One vivid daybreak,—who had gone to bed
In the old way my wont those last three years,
Careless until, the cup drained, I should die.
The last sound in my ear
Something let drop on the sly
In prattle by Margherita,
"Gaieties end, now Easter's past: a week,
And the Archbishop gets him back to Rome,—
Everyone leaves the town for Rome, this Spring,—
Even Caponsacchi, out of heart and hope,
Resigns himself and follows with the flock."
I heard this drop and drop like rain outside
Fast-falling through the darkness while she spoke:
—My sole thought
Being still, as night came, "Done, another day!
"How good to sleep and so get nearer death!"—
When, what, first thing at daybreak, pierced the sleep
With a summons to me? Up I sprang alive,
Light in me, light without me, everywhere
Change!
I stepped forth,
Stood on the terrace,—o'er the roofs, such sky!
My heart sang, "I too am to go away,
I too have something I must care about,
Carry away with me to Rome, to Rome."[5]

Now, understand here, by no means mistake!
Long ago had I tried to leave that house
When it seemed such procedure would stop sin;
And still failed more the more I tried—at first
The Archbishop, as I told you,—next, our lord
The Governor,—indeed I found my way,
I went to the great palace where he rules,
—Scarce opened lip
When—the cold cruel snicker close behind—

[5] This was Pompilia's first knowledge that she was to have a child.

Guido was on my trace, already there,
Exchanging nod and wink for shrug and smile,
And I—pushed back to him and, for my pains,
Paid with . . . . but why remember what is past?

I sought out a poor friar the people call
The Roman, and confessed my sin
Implored him, "Write for me who cannot write,
Apprise my parents, make them rescue me!
You bid me be courageous and trust God:
Do you in turn dare somewhat, trust and write
And he promised—wrote
Or did not write; things never changed at all:

Last, in a desperation I appealed
To friends, whoever wished me better days,
I tried Conti, "You—
Who well know what you cannot save me from,—
Carry me off! What frightens you, a priest?"
He shook his head, looked grave—"Above my strength!
Guido has claws that scratch, shows feline teeth;
A formidabler foe than I dare fret:
Give me a dog to deal with, twice the size!
Of course I am a priest and Canon too,
But . . . . by the bye . . . . though both, not quite so bold
As he, my fellow-Canon, brother-priest,
Our Caponsacchi, he's your true Saint George
To slay the monster, set the Princess free."

7. That name had got to take a half-grotesque
Half-ominous, wholly enigmatic sense,
Like any bye-word, broken bit of song
Born with a meaning, changed by mouth and mouth
That mix it in a sneer or smile, as chance
Bids, till it now means nought but ugliness
And perhaps shame.

—All this intends to say,
That, over-night, the notion of escape

Had seemed distemper, dreaming:
—Yet now,
Now, as I stood letting morn bathe me bright,
Choosing which butterfly should bear my news,[6]—
The white, the brown one, or that tinier blue,—
The Margherita, I detested so,
In she came—"The fine day, the good Spring time!
What, up and out at window? That is best.
No thought of Caponsacchi?—who stood there
All night on one leg, like the sentry crane,
Under the pelting of your water-spout—
Looked last look at your lattice ere he leave
Our city, bury his dead hope at Rome?

I turned—"Tell Caponsacchi he may come!"

"Tell him to come? Ah, but, for charity,
A truce to fooling! Come? What,—come this eve?
Peter and Paul! But I see through the trick—
Yes, come, and take a flower-pot on his head
Flung from your terrace! No joke, sincere truth?"

How plainly I perceived hell flash and fade
O' the face of her,—the doubt that first paled joy,
Then, final reassurance I indeed
Was caught now, never to be free again!
What did I care?—
Off she went—"May he not refuse, that's all—
Fearing a trick!"

I answered, "He will come."
And, all day, I sent prayer like incense up
To God the strong, God the beneficent,
God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
Who, for our own good, makes the need extreme,
Till at the last He puts forth might and saves.

[6] Of the babe to be.

And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew
Until at an intense throe of the dusk,
I started up, was pushed, I dare to say,
Out on the terrace, leaned and looked at last
Where the deliverer waited me: the same
Silent and solemn face, I first descried
At the spectacle, confronted mine once more.
I spoke on the instant, as my duty bade,
In some such sense as this, whatever the phrase.
"Friend, foolish words were borne from you to me;
Your soul behind them is the pure strong wind,
Not dust and feathers which its breath may bear:
I speak to the strong soul, no weak disguise.
Since a long while now,
I am in course of being put to death:
While death concerned nothing but me, I bowed
The head and bade, in heart, my husband strike.
Now I imperil something more, it seems,
Something that's trulier me than this myself,
Something I trust in God and you to save.
You go to Rome, they tell me: take me there,
Put me back with my people!"

He replied—
The first word I heard ever from his lips,
All himself in it,—an eternity
Of speech, to match the immeasurable depths
O' the soul that then broke silence—"I am yours."

So did the star rise, soon to lead my step,
Lead on, nor pause before it should stand still
Above the House o' the Babe,—my babe to be,
That knew me first and thus made me know him,
That had his right of life and claim on mine,
And would not let me die till he was born,
But pricked me at the heart to save us both,
Saying "Have you the will? Leave God the way!"
And the way was Caponsacchi.

The second night, he came.
"The plan is rash; the project desperate:
In such a flight needs must I risk your life,
Give food for falsehood, folly or mistake
Ground for your husband's rancour and revenge"—
So he began again, with the same face.

"No, friend, for you will take me! 'Tis yourself
Risk all, not I,—who let you, for I trust
In the compensating great God: enough!
I know you: when is it that you will come?"

"To-morrow at the day's dawn." Then I heard
What I should do: how to prepare for flight
And where to fly.

That night my husband bade
"—You, whom I loathe, beware you break my sleep
This whole night! Couch beside me like the corpse
I would you were!" The rest you know, I think—
How I found Caponsacchi and escaped.

THE RIVALS

BY

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

1. RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN'S satiric comedy, The Rivals, was first produced in London in 1775. From that day to this it has been regarded as one of the best comedies outside of Shakespeare. The part of Bob Acres in this play was made famous by the acting of Joseph Jefferson, and the play itself finds perennial production.

The scene of this play is laid in the city of Bath, England, when that city was a favorite society center. To this city of Bath came society-seekers from all classes. The gouty rich were there seeking relief in new forms of gluttony. The titled fortune-hunters were there seeking rich heiresses, and the rich heiresses were there looking for the men with titles. Uncouth social-climbers were in Bath to absorb polish and practice vanity. Ignorance and pride, awkwardness and superficiality, false sentiment and shallow ambition, trickery and deception, in all their human laughableness were in Bath.

Human weaknesses are common among all people and in all ages. Sometimes these weaknesses make us laugh, and we have comedy; sometimes they make us weep, and we have tragedy; sometimes they make us think, and we have a problem-play. The same human frailty may make us laugh or weep or think depending on our mood or point of view. If a fat woman slips down on an icy sidewalk without evident personal injury it is comedy to those who look on. It makes them laugh. But it is tragedy to her. It hurts her pride; and the more others laugh the more it hurts her. But this situation is a problem-play to the city council and organizations on public safety. In this play, The Rivals, we laugh at human weaknesses which under some circumstances might make us grieve.

The central character in the plot of this play is a seventeen-year-old girl named Lydia Languish. She is rich, romantic, and sentimental. Something of her nature may be felt by pronouncing her last name slowly and in three syllables, Lan-gu-ish. She is just a young thing who has filled her mind secretly on sentimental novels; but she is quite human and lovable, or will be when she gets more sense by-and-by. She has a desire to be

unusual, to do something extraordinary, to have a romantic thrill. She does not want to marry in the ordinary way, with a wedding march, ring-bearers, and relatives around. She wants to elope, to marry a poor fellow so that he will know that she loves him for himself alone. But she will know more by-and-by.

Lydia Languish is not quite her own boss. She is in Bath in charge of her aunt, Mrs. Malaprop, a marriageable widow of fifty, whose chief interest is in finding a proper husband for her neice, although she is not averse to matrimony herself if a suitable man should come her way. Her chief weakness is her use of big words whose meanings do not fit the case. So strongly is this weakness of Mrs. Malaprop impressed upon us that the word malapropism is in common use. The use of words rightly pronounced but with the wrong meaning is not uncommon even among college students. These malapropisms are always amusing, to those who do not use them.

Lydia Languish has four rivals for her hand. The foremost of these is Jack Absolute as Ensign Beverly. Jack Absolute is a poor captain in the army, although his father, Sir Anthony Absolute is a rich baronet. He has seen Lydia while she was visiting in the country near his father's estate, has fallen in love with her at first sight, has learned that she is sentimental and will probably have nothing to do with him as the son of a rich baronet, has followed her to Bath, assumed the name of Ensign Beverly, made love to her unknown to Mrs. Malaprop, and won her promise to elope with him. However, Mrs. Malaprop discovers this affair, keeps close watch of Lydia, and commands her never to think of this fellow, Beverly, again; an injunction which any well-ordered love-sick girl would find hard to obey.

Sir Anthony Absolute has also seen Lydia. He knows that she is a rich heiress, but more than that he thinks she is a most attractive girl. What a wife she would make! Not for himself, but for his son, Jack Absolute. Sir Anthony decides to go to Bath and make this proposal to Mrs. Malaprop. He does not stop to consult his son about it, for Sir Anthony Absolute is not the kind of father that consults his son on such minor things as matrimony. It's none of Jack's business anyhow.

The third rival for the hand of Lydia Languish is a little country fellow named Bob Acres. He has met Lydia on her visit in the country, has received from her those attentions that a city girl sometimes pays to a country fellow when there are no others fellows around, has been urged on by his friends, and thinks that if he can just go to Bath and get the society polish that he can win her.

The fourth rival is a tall handsome Irish baronet by the name of Sir Lucius O'Trigger; whose chief weakness is an abnormal sense of honor, which he carries on his sleeve, and a constant desire to have others defend their honor by fighting duels. He hasn't money but he is in Bath hoping to get rich quick by matrimony. He has seen Lydia at a dance, learns that she is rich in her own name, and is told that her name is Delia. As a matter of fact Mrs. Malaprop's name is Delia; and when Sir Lucius writes letters to Lydia addressing them "My dear Delia" the servant gives these letters to Mrs. Malaprop; who is much flattered and delighted to have this handsome young Irishman call her "Dear Delia." She answers the letters; and there grows up quite an affectionate correspondence between Sir Lucius and Mrs. Malaprop, entirely unintentional on the part of Sir Lucius.

But Lydia cares nothing for any of these rivals except Beverly, her Beverly! She is one of these stubborn girls who wants her own way in matrimonial affairs. Her conduct is very irritating to Mrs. Malaprop, a woman of large physical dignity, who likes to move well both physically and socially. Anyone who likes to run the affairs of young people can appreciate how annoying Lydia's state of mind must be to a woman like Mrs. Malaprop. It is well that Mrs. Malaprop does not know all the things that Lydia does, for Lydia loves to read the cheap sentimental novels of her time. Mrs. Malaprop would not have these in her house.

2. In the first part of this play that we shall review we see Lydia seated at a table in the main room of the fashionable lodging that she and Mrs. Malaprop occupy. She is inspecting an armful of sentimental novels that her servant Lucy has just brought from a circulating library. Lucy standing at the window sees Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony Absolute coming to the house, and at once she is busy helping Lydia hide these novels. As they hear Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony coming up the stairs Lydia sends Lucy from the room, takes a copy of Fordyce's sermons and pretends to be reading from this serious stuff as Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony come into the room. Mrs. Malaprop has been telling Sir Anthony how Lydia wants to throw her sweet young self away on an unknown fellow named Beverly, and as she sees Lydia she say to Sir Anthony:

Mrs. Mal. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lyd. Madam, I thought you once—

Mrs. Mal. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you

have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lyd. Ah, madam! It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. Mal. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed. But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friend's choosing?

Lyd. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. Mal. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But will you promise us to give up this Beverly?

Lyd. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Mal. Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Lyd. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Mal. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs. Mal. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—

Mrs. Mal. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an ever-given tree of diabolical knowledge.

Mrs. Mal. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. Mal. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

Mrs. Mal. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. Mal. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days,

'twas "Jack do this"; if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. Mal. Ah, and the properest way, o' my conscience!—nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations;—and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl.—Take my advice—keep a tight hand; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Mal. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered by partiality for Sir Lucious O'Trigger.

3. When Bob Acres came to Bath he did not come in an automobile. He came in a coach and drove his own horses and helped his old servant David handle the luggage. As soon as he arrived in Bath and found lodgings he left David in charge of the luggage and went at once to the lodgings of his old friend Jack Absolute. Bob Acres would make a strange looking fellow on the street today. He is dressed in a leather hunting frock, leather breeches, high boots, and a high half-conical hat. He carries his driving whip in his hand to give himself an air, like a college senior with a cane, and when he takes off his hat we see that his hair is done up in curling papers. He has already started the polishing process at the top. He enters Jack's room with an air of sprightliness, and greets him with the words:

Acres. Ha! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how do'st thou? just arrived, faith, as you see.—Warm work on the roads, Jack!—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Abs. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither.—Bob! let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me. She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs and tambours! I shan't take matters so here, I'll make my old clothes know who's master. I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable. My hair has been in training some time.

Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay—and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely, I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Abs. Spoke like a man!

Jack's servant, Fag, comes into the room and announces:

Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you.—Shall I show him into the parlour?

Abs. Ay—you may.

Who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly?

Fag goes out to bring in Sir Anthony and Bob says:

You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop at my lodgings. Adieu, Jack! we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Abs. That I will Bob, with all my heart.

Bob goes out and Jack says to himself:

Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

But when his father enters the room Jack pretends to be very glad to see him.

Abs. Sir, I am delighted to see you here; looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—

Sir Anth. I am glad you are so sensible of my attention. You shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

Abs. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle between you.

Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mus'n't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference.

Abs. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Abs. I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Abs. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir. Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Abs. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel.

Sir Anth. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

Abs. But my vows are pledged to her.

Sir Anth. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming.

Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark'ee, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy.

Abs. Sir, I must repeat—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now damn me! if ever I call you Jack again!

Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't,—

Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness!

Sir Anth. Zounds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum, she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jack-anapes!

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir. I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please!—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word—

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again! don't provoke me! You rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition!—Yet take care—the patience of a saint may not be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do everything on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you.—If not, zounds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me! if ever I call you Jack again! [*Exit* Sir Anthony.

Abs. Mild, gentle, considerate father—I kiss your hands!—What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has!—I wonder what old wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me!

4. Jack goes out upon the street by the park to get the air and to think things over. There he meets his servant who tells him that the old hag his father wants him to marry is Lydia Languish, the girl he wants to elope with. Jack decides to yield to his father's wishes at once. He says to himself:

'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connection with her yet awhile. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed—but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so—here he comes. He looks plaguy gruff.

Jack steps behind some shrubbery as his father comes along the street. Sir Anthony is also out for air but it seems to do him no good. He can't get over the last meeting with his son. He mutters to himself:

No—I'll die sooner than forgive him. Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? I never will see him more, never—never—never.

As Jack steps out so his father can see him he says to himself:

Now for a penitential face.

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way.

Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Abs. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Abs. I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflections is—a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why now you talk sense—absolute sense.—I never heard anything more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again.

Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you

who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! no. Did you ever meet Mrs. Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet stay—I think I do recollect something. Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints! A red-haired girl! Zounds! no.

Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but, Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing, at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack her lips! O, Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness. Then, Jack, her neck! O Jack! Jack!

Abs. And which is to be mine, sir; the niece or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched anything old or ugly to gain an empire.

Abs. Not to please your father, sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father! zounds! not to please—Oh, my father—odd so!—yes—yes; if my father indeed had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he wa'n't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Abs. Sir, I repeat it—if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and though one eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite!—a vile, insensible stock. You a soldier!—you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life! I have a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir: if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt; or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady—'tis the same to me—I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—come, confess, Jack—you have been lying, ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey!—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! Come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethean torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I will marry the girl myself!

5. Sir Anthony writes a letter of introduction to Mrs. Malaprop, and Jack has to take it and run the risk of having his dual character found out. Mrs. Malaprop receives this letter, reads it, looks Jack over and says to him:

Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs. Mal. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated. He is the very pine-apple of politeness!—You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eavesdropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows anything of.

Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

Mrs. Mal. You are very good and very considerate, captain, I am sure I have done everything in my power since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's proposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

Abs. It must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree.—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

Abs. Oh, the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Ay, here it is. There, perhaps you may know the writing.

[*Gives him the letter.*]

Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before—

Mrs. Mal. Nay, but read it, captain.

Abs. [Reads.] *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!*—Very tender, indeed!

Mrs. Mal. Tender, ay, and profane too, o' my conscience.

Abs. [Reads.] *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival—*

Mrs. Mal. That's you, sir.

Abs. [Reads.] *Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman and a man of honour.*—Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs. Mal. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs. Mal. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

Abs. [Reads.] *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you.*—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs. Mal. Me, sir!—me!—he means me!—There—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—[Reads.] *it shall go hard, but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand——*

Mrs. Mal. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—[Reads.] *same ridiculous vanity——*

Mrs. Mal. You need not read it again, sir.

Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am.—[Reads.] *does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*—an impudent coxcomb!—*so that I have a scheme to see you shortly with the old harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview.*—Was ever such assurance!

Mrs. Mal. Did you ever hear anything like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he?—Yes, yes! ha! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors;—we'll try who can plot best!

Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will! Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha!—Well, but, Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the

nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs. Mal. I am delighted with the scheme; never was anything better perpetrated!

Abs. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now? —I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs. Mal. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

Abs. O Lord! she won't mind me—only tell her Beverly——

Mrs. Mal. Sir! What did you say of Beverley?

Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverly who was below; she'd come down fast enough then.

Mrs. Mal. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling.*] He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Abs. One would think now that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

He turns his back as Lydia enters. She does not look at him but says coldly:

Mr. Absolute.

Abs. Ma'am.

Lyd. O heavens! Beverly!

Abs. Hush;—hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

Lyd. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

Abs. Briefly, I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lyd. O charming! And she really takes you for young Absolute.

Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lyd. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is overreached!

Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur; then let me conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

Jack embraces Lydia with warmth but without license, and under the influence of this persuasion she feels that she could fly with him to the ends of the earth. But she is afraid that the time for her romance is not yet ripe, and she grows thoughtful and breaks from Jack's embrace. He says to her:

So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs. Malaprop returns just in time to overhear the words; "warmth abated" and she says to herself:

Warmth abated!—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lyd. No—nor ever can while I have life.

Mrs. Mal. An ill-tempered little devil!

Lyd. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs. Mal. I am astonished at her assurance!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Abs. Oh, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs. Mal. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

Abs. [*Aside.*] So all's safe, I find.—[*Aloud.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady——

Mrs. Mal. Oh, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile.

Lyd. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lyd. No, madam—I did not.

Mrs. Mal. Good heavens! what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley, that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lyd. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley——

Mrs. Mal. Hold!—hold, Assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs. Mal. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lyd. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev—

Mrs. Mal. Hussy! I'll choke the word in your throat!—come along—come along.

In this way Jack escapes from a difficult situation without having his duplicity discovered.

6. The following scene is laid in Bob Acres's rooms. Bob has spent good money for some fine clothes, now that his old mother cannot restrain her grown-up son. He is dressed in the height of fashion; in rich frock and kneebreeches, with lace around the wrists and at the neck, with long silk ribbons at the knees, and with silk stockings and silver buckles on low shoes. His hair has passed through its training and is now in a beautiful frizzle all over his head. He is really quite a dandy. As he examines himself in the long mirror he feels that any girl would look with favor on him. He has discovered that a very important item in social success is ability to dance the latest dances; so he has hired a dancing-master to teach him the newfangled tangoes and fox-trots of his time. But his feet want to behave as in a country dance. They cannot remember all the movements. He is absorbed in practicing his dancing before a mirror when his new friend Sir Lucius O'Trigger comes into the room. Bob does not see Sir Lucius but dances back into his arms. Sir Lucius holds Bob for a moment and looks down on him with a sense of the humor in the situation and says:

Mrs. Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir Luc. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last.—In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir Lucius.—I don't choose to mention names, but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir Luc. Pray what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of.—This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir Luc. Very ill, upon my conscience.—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir. Luc. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir Luc. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir Luc. We wear no swords here, but you understand me.

Acres. What! fight him.

Sir Luc. Ay, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Luc. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another man than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! ay, ay; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir Luc. That's no argument at all—he has less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right on my side?

Sir Luc. What the devil signifies right when your honour is

concerned? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broad-swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say.—Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir Luc. Ah, my little friend, if I had Blunderbuss Hall here, I could show you a range of ancestry, in the old O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room; every one of whom had killed his man! —For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank heaven our honour and the family-pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. O, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too!—every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia!—Odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it. The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast:—Zounds! as the man in the plays says, *I could do such deeds!*

Sir Luc. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage. —Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me. Come, here's pen and paper.—[*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red! Indite, I say, indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir. Luc. Pray compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—Sir——

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir Luc. To prevent the confusion that might arise——

Acres. Well—

Sir Luc. From our both addressing the same lady——

Acres. Ay, there's the reason—*same lady*—well——

Sir Luc. I shall expect the honour of your company——

Acres. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner.

Sir Luc. Pray be easy.

Acres. Well, then, *honour of your company*——

Sir Luc. To settle our pretensions——

Acres. Well.

Sir Luc. Let me see, ay, King's-Mead-Fields will do—*in King's-Mead-Fields.*

Acres. So, that's done—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

Sir Luc. You see now this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir Luc. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir Luc. I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

Sir Luc. I shall be very proud of instructing you—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword.

7. When Bob's old Servant, David, hears that his master is to fight a dual with an unknown fellow named Beverly, he is greatly disturbed. David had been a servant in Bob's family for years and now he is afraid that he will have to go back home and tell Bob's old mother that Bob has been killed. David is trying to persuade Bob not to fight. He pleads with real earnestness, and not without a sense of grim humor.

Dav. Then, by the mass, sir! I would do no such thing—ne'er a St. Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wasn't so minded.

Acres. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius—Odds sparks and flames; he would have roused your valour.

Dav. Not he, indeed. I hates such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry off: but for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of 'em.

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

Dav. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour! What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

Dav. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very great danger, hey?—Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

Dav. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-hearted fellow, I warrant, with his double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us it makes me tremble to think o't—Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide 'em!—from a child I never could fancy 'em!—I suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Zounds! I won't be afraid!—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.—Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

Dav. Ay, i' the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! is is a designing and malicious-looking letter;

and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out you poltroon! you ha'nt the valour of a grasshopper.

Dav. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall! but I ha' done. How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—Ah, poor dog, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born.

[*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

A servant enters and announces:

Captain Absolute, sir.

Acres. Oh! show him up. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Dav. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

Acres. What's that?—Don't provoke me, David!

Dav. Good-bye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven!

As Acres drives David out of one door Jack enters at another.

Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead! If I hadn't the valour of St. George and the dragon to boot——

Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. Oh!—There—— [*Gives him the challenge.*

Abs. [*Aside.*] *To Ensign Beverley.*—So, what's going on now? —[*Aloud.*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Abs. Indeed! Why, you won't fight him; will you, Bob?

Acres. Egad, but I will, Jack. Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Abs. Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second, could you, Jack?

Abs. Why, no, Bob—not in this affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack?

Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

The servant re-enters and says:

Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

Abs. I'll come instantly.—[*Exit* SERVANT.] Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

Acres. Stay—stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Abs. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

Acres. Ah, do, do—and if that frightens him, egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country Fighting Bob.

Acres. True, true—but stay—stay, Jack,—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Abs. Ay, ay, Fighting Bob!

8. Jack goes out carrying the challenge to himself in his pocket. His father is waiting for him, determined to take him to Mrs. Malaprop's lodgings to see that he proposes marriage to Lydia. Sir Anthony is impatient with his son. Jack does not seem aggressive enough for the old man, so Sir Anthony decides to go with Jack to help him out. Jack, like any young fellow, is of course glad to have his father present when he proposes to the girl he loves. Sir Anthony can't understand why

Jack seems so reluctant to go with him. He has to take Jack by the arm and half-drag him to Mrs. Malaprop's lodgings.

In the meantime Mrs. Malaprop, who has arranged with Sir Anthony for this meeting, is having her trouble with Lydia. Lydia declares that she will have nothing to do with Jack Absolute; that she will not even look at or speak to him; and when Sir Anthony enters the room with Jack, she turns her back, sits straight up on the edge of her chair, and shuts her mouth firmly like a child who refuses to take disagreeable medicine. Sir Anthony at once senses the difficulty of the situation, and does his best to warm the atmosphere. He says with as much gallantry and enthusiasm as he can call up:

Here w e are, Mrs. Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow. —I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs. Mal. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair. I am ashamed for the cause!—[*Aside to* Lydia.] Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects!

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—[*Aside to* Captain Absolute.] Now, Jack, speak, speak to her.

Mrs. Mal. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—[*Aside to* Lydia.] Turn round, Lydia: I blush for you!

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—[*Aside to* Captain Absolute.] Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy —speak!

As Sir Anthony turns his back on the scene to give Jack a little privacy in this delicate affair, Jack with much confusion attempts to speak.

Abs. Hem! hem! madam—hem!—[*Turning to* Sir Anthony.] Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and—so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

Again Sir Anthony turns his back and Jack says to himself:

Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice.—[*Draws near* LYDIA, *and speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not——

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow? why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsy!

Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—modesty, quite choke me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your modesty again!—I'll tell you what, Jack, if you didn't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front.

Mrs. Malaprop tries to make Lydia show something more than a side-front, but her efforts are useless. She does the next best thing and steps back to give Jack a chance. Jack hopes that Lydia will have enough self-control not to appear surprised when he tells her the truth. He steps close to her and says quietly:

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lyd. [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice! *Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible?—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley?

Sir Anth. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—this is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. Mal. For shame, hussy! for shame! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

Lyd. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Zounds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turned by reading.

Mrs. Mal. O my conscience, I believe so!—What do you mean by Beverley, hussy?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband that shall be.

Lyd. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. Oh! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

Abs. Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavor to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?

Mrs. Mal. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!——

Abs. [*Aside.*] Ye powers of impudence, befriend me!—[*Aloud.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your son; Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name and station, which has proved a test of the most disinteretsed love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia in great disappointment sinks back into her chair exclaiming:

So!—there will be no elopement after all!

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir—you compliment—'tis my modesty, you know, sir—my modesty that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog -I am. So this was your *penitence,* your *duty* and *obedience!*—I thought it was sudden!—*You never heard their names before,* not you!—*what, the Languishes of Worcestershire,* hey?—*if you could please me in the affair it was all you desired!* —Ah you dissembling villain!—What!—[*Pointing to* Lydia.] *she squints, don't she? a little red-haired girl!*—Why, you hypocritical young rascal!—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir.—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. Mal. O Lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me! hey!—how! what! captain, did you write the letters then?—What—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of *an old*

weather-beaten she-dragon—hey?—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Abs. Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured! and so gallant! hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. Mal. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past!—so mind, young people—our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack, isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue?—and the lip—hey? Come, Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!—*Youth's the season made for joy*—[*Sings*]—hey!—Odds life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—[*Gives his hand to* Mrs. Malaprop.] Tol-de-rol—'gad, I should like to have a little fooling myself —Tol-de-rol! de-rol.

And Sir Anthony Absolute this ardent old widower leads Mrs. Malaprop this marriageable old widow out of the room, leaving the young people to fly into each others arms.

But Cupid does not always fly as some people expect and intend. Lydia is so injured to think that she has been deceived by the man she has trusted, and is so disappointed to think that her romantic love dream is broken, that she renounces Jack Absolute, there and then, forever.

9. It may be a good thing for a girl to renounce her lover once in a while, but it is dangerous to renounce him forever. She may want to change her mind, and that is always embarassing to a woman. That is just what Lydia Languish had to do. Jack Absolute, renounced forever, goes out or the street not caring what becomes of himself. There he meets Sir Lucius O'Trigger who on some imagined insult to his honor challenges Jack to a duel. Jack accepts, and they agree to fight that evening on King's-Mead-Fields at the very time and place where Jack as Beverly is to fight Bob Acres. When Lydia learns this from David she at once forgets that she has renounced Jack Absolute forever.

That evening Bob Acres and Sir Lucius O'Trigger as his second are at King's-Mead-Fields. They are carrying long duelling pistols, and Bob is trying to persuade Sir Lucius to let him stand far away from his opponent when the duel takes place. It is strange how valor seeks to yield to discretion in the face of danger, and how argument becomes earnest when self-protection is needed. Bob says to Sir Lucius:

By my valour! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good ditsance. Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Luc. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Steps off a few paces.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Luc. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius; but I should think forty or eight and thirty yards——

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour! there is no merit in killing him so near; do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me.

Sir Luc. Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me, now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius, but I don't understand——

Sir Luc. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir Luc. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey? I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir Luc. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Luc. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing. Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files!—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there. A side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough? I'll stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Levelling at him.*]

Acres. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir Luc. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir Luc. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part.

Sir Luc. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him.*]—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir Luc. Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valour! I will stand edgeways.

Sir Luc. [*Looking off for them.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what—coming!—

Sir Luc. Ay.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them indeed!—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Luc. Run!

Acres. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir Luc. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Luc. O fy!—consider your honour.

Acres. Ay—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Luc. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me! Valour will come and go.

Sir Luc. Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands!

Sir Luc. Your honour—your honour.—here they are.

Acres. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

In his fear Bob sinks down upon a log, and does not see that the two men coming are his friends, Jack Absolute and Mr. Faulkland. Sir Lucius, who has never seen Mr. Faulkland before, thinks that he is Beverly and that Jack has come to act as his second. Sir Lucius greets them with the words:

Gentleman, your most obedient.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself— to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Abs. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir Luc. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To* FAULKLAND.] So, Mr. Beverley, if you'll choose your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my particular friends.

Sir Luc. What, sir, did you not come here to fight Mr. Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir Luc. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party by sitting out.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on the matter——

Acres. No, no, Mr. Faulkland;—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir Luc. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no—Sir Lucius—I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—if he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir Luc. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity—

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute?—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

Sir Luc. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or anything of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir Luc. Pho! pho! you are little better than coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke.—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls—

Sir Luc. Well, sir?

Acres. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir Luc. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres.—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!

Sir Luc. Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor—[*Draws his sword*]—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

Abs. Come on then, sir—[*Draws*]; since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

As the two men start to fight, David followed by Sir Anthony, Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia rushes into the scene, crying:

Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular.

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a frenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

Abs. Faith, sir, that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad! sir, how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir Luc. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs. Malaprop not understanding the meaning of the word honour says:

Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am?

Mrs. Mal. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak child.

Sir Luc. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word, here: I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence. Now mark——

Lyd. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir Luc. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lyd. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Abs. O! my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here, with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you. I can only say that it could not have been intentional. I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world; and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

Sir Luc. Captain, give me your hand: an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation; and as for the lady, if she chooses to deny her own handwriting, here——[*Takes out letters.*]

Mrs. Mal. O, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir Luc. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia or not?

Lyd. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

Mrs. Mal. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir Luc. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs. Mal. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine.—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir Luc. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick on me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir Luc. Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius,

forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce—that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs. Mal. O Sir Anthony—men are all barbarian.

Sir Luc. Come, now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better.

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy. Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. 'Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

MACBETH

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

1. SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF MACBETH is a story of inordinate ambition, encouraged by superstition and realized through the aid of chance. Ambition, superstition, and chance have always played a large part in the lives of men. The things we desire most intensely and persistently from day to day and from year to year, and the things we believe will come to pass in spite of reason and natural law, and the things that chance throws in our way are the things we attain and become.

Inordinate ambition has burned out the glory of life in multitudes of men, many of whom the world has called great. Again and again in the history of the world it has ridden rough shod over human life into political power and the insolence of office. Born of natural greatness, inordinate ambition has destroyed greatness. It has made life "a fitful fever," "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Inordinate ambition is no respector of persons or classes or the sweep of time. Every individual in whom the spark of personal desire glows has within him the germ of a self-destroying ambition. Human ambition like the power of lightning may destroy as well as illuminate; like the power of fire it may warm or consume. "Thriftless ambition, that wilt raven up thine own life's means."

Superstition always has been and still is the ignorant but busy handmaid of inordinate ambition. Through the ages men have believed that they were the chosen favorites of gods and that the gods fought for them. Kings and rulers have thought themselves the divinely appointed masters over other men. Personal power and ambition have led to false reasoning and self-approving superstitions. Superstition has encouraged inordinate ambition, and protected it in its tyrannies by oracles, mummeries, magic, and charms. In olden times men believed in all sorts of good and evil omens, wonders, and signs. In Macbeth's day men believed that there were evil spirits in the air, "murdering ministers that wait on nature's mischief;" that night was the revel-time of mischief; that the croaking of the raven or the howling of the wolf were signals for evil and death

to do their work. They believed that the eclipse of the moon was the work of evil spirits, and that such numbers as three, five, seven, and nine had power in producing charms over human life. Today we no longer fear such numbers as three, five, seven, and nine, and yet there are still some people who are a little shy of thirteen. There are still folks who believe that Friday is a bad day on which to begin a new piece of work, and that a horseshoe or a four-leaf clover brings good luck. Some girls still sleep on wedding cake in order that dreams of their future love affairs may come to them; or they look at the new moon over this shoulder or that. Many a country lad at the sight of a shooting star has tried to say, "Money, money, money," before the light of the star failed, believing that this would bring him wealth. But faith in this superstition usually dies out when the years bring only the wealth of experience. Many a city boy has pinned his hopes on the possession of an agate marble. People have always wanted to know the future. There are still many who seek the fortune-teller; many who believe that warts can be removed by charms, evil warded off by a rabbit's foot, or disease averted by a sacred pendant hung about the neck.

There used to be an old superstition that was common in certain parts of Pennsylvania which reflects the belief that Macbeth had, that "withered murder" was "alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf." It was believed that when a dog howled long in the middle of the night someone was dying. One night a good Pennsylvania-Dutch woman heard the farm dog howling and howling. She became very nervous with the fear of death in her mind. The dog would not stop. As one mournful wail died away in the distant hills and the silence was about to settle the dog would begin again. If you have ever listened to the howling and howling of a dog in the country during long watches of the night you know that it is a weird sound, even when there is no superstition connected with it. You can understand why this good woman aroused her husband. "Fritz, Fritz," she said, "de dog is howling, de dog is howling, someone is dying." But Fritz was more sleepy than superstitious and would not listen to her. He added his own snoring to the weird mystery of the night. But his wife could not sleep. The dog kept on howling and howling. Again she aroused her husband. "Fritz, Fritz, I told you de dog is howling. Someone is dying, someone is dying." But Fritz would not believe. "Go to sleep, go to sleep. Nobody is dying, I tell you. Go to sleep." But a few days after this when their weekly paper came they read that a man had died in Philadelphia the very same night.

In spite of the humor some of us find in superstition and false reason-

ing we can appreciate the great influence that these weaknesses have upon the ambitions of men like Macbeth.

It is hardly necessary to emphasize the place that chance plays in the lives of men. We are all in a large measure creatures of circumstances beyond our choosing or control. Our race, our language, our political and social environment, our customs, even our business and our ideals are largely matters of chance. While we have large choice in our desires and ambitions, opportunity in the form of chance often turns the whole course of a life. Ambitions, great and small, good and evil, wait upon the chance of time and place and opportunity for their realization in action.

2. The central character about whom Shakespeare has woven this story of inordinate ambition is named Macbeth. Macbeth was a man who lived in Scotland eight or nine hundred years ago when the kings of Scotland were named by the leaders of the people. He was a general in the armies of King Duncan, the good king of Scotland. He was the king's own cousin. He was loved by his soldiers, respected by the people, and favored by the King. In short Macbeth was the greatest man in Scotland except the King. He knew his greatness, and out of this greatness came his temptation. He has the qualities of a king. He wanted to become king. To become king became his insatiable ambition. He felt certain that if Duncan should die the people would choose him for their king. But Macbeth knew that Duncan was not apt to die for many years, for Duncan was still a young man, in good health, loved by the people, no normal chance for natural or untimely death. And Duncan had two sons, Malcolm and Donaldbain, young lads yet in their teens, who would grow up and into favor with the people, and on their father's death one of them would probably become king. So it was that Macbeth saw his hope of becoming king growing less and less certain of realization with the oncoming of the years.

It was at this point that there came into Macbeth's mind a very insidious and subtle suggestion. He thought to himself, "If Duncan should die now, I will become king. But Duncan is not apt to die now,—except by accident. If I could bring about that accident!"

I imagine that when Macbeth first thought about killing Duncan as a means of making himself king that the thought startled him; that he drew back from it as one draws back from a rattlesnake coiled in his path. Macbeth did not like this ugly suggestion. He tried to put it away from him, just as we try to put away those evil thoughts that come unbidden to our minds. But his ambition brought it back to him again

and again, until he took it in into the dark and secret corners of his mind, out of sight of man and God. There he entertained it and listened to it, until his consciousness of right seemed far away and his awareness of expediency was strong; listened until the human kindness in his nature was forgotten in his desire to "catch the nearest way"; listened until this thought so mastered him that he told his wife, Lady Macbeth, his "dearest partner in greatness," the one who must share the success or failure of any scheme with him.

She, ambitious woman, accepted the idea; and the two of them talked it over together; and Macbeth went so far as to assert that he would make opportunity to kill the king; not intending to do it, you understand, just boasting about it. Thus this evil suggestion grew until at last it so possessed these two people that when it was encouraged by the prophecies of the Witches, the chief forces of superstition in this play, and when it was made possible by a visit of Duncan to Macbeth's castle, this suggestion became an act,—the act of murder.

This is an old story as old as the human race. But it is a new story, as new as this morning's sunrise. The men and women who occupy the cells in our penetentiaries are not there because of a sudden plunge from moral heights into the depths of sin and crime; they are there because of the evolution of an idea. Shakespeare did not write plays to preach sermons, but to hold the mirror up to nature in such a way that we might see life as it truly is, and seeing, know the truth, and need no sermons; yet not greater sermon was ever preached on the text, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," than this tragedy of Macbeth.

The other characters in this play besides Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Duncan and his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, are first of all, Banquo. Banquo was also a general in the armies of the king; a great general, equal in many respects to Macbeth. He was a man of kingly powers, and a man with desires to become king. But Banquo differed from Macbeth in one very important respect. To Macbeth the greatest good in the world was the throne of Scotland; to Banquo the greatest good in the world was his own clear conscience enthroned. Banquo has an only son named Fleance.

There were many Scottish lords, or thanes, chief among them Macduff, the Thane of Fife. Then there were the witches, the weird sisters as they called themselves.

3. These witches were not like the witches that our forefathers killed in Salem Massachusetts a hundred years after Shakespeare wrote this play. They were the spirits of evil that inhabited the air, with power to trans-

port themselves instantly from the ends of the earth, and to find and encourage evil in the lives of men. They were not old women, yet when they appeared to the eyes of men they took upon themselves forms something like the forms of ragged old women. Their bodies were bent and bony, their fingers long and skinny, their hair disheveled and wind-blown, their eyes hollow, their cheeks deeply furrowed. Upon their chins were beards like the beards of wild men. They were neither men nor women. They were without sex. Their voices were strange and unnatural, and mingled weirdly with the wind and storm of which these witches seemed a part.

Their function in the life of Macbeth was not to awaken in him the desire to become king nor to suggest to him the evil means to this end. Their work was simply to encourage the inordinate ambition that already existed, knowing that evil means would be the way.

The first meeting between these evil spirits and Macbeth takes place on an open heath in the country. The day is dark and stormy, the clouds hang low, the wind whistles over the waste land. Into this scene like a flash of lightning come these evil spirits. They know that Macbeth will pass this way, for they know everything where evil is possible, and they have evil work with Macbeth. They are very busy creatures that have been about their evil work at the ends of the earth, and are now on the instant met again; and now on the instant they begin to make inquiry concerning each other. Their questions and replies have a gossipy, morbid freshness in them. The First Witch says to one of the others:

1 Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
2 Witch. Killing swine.
3 Witch. Sister, where thou?
1 Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd. *Give me,* quoth I:
Aroint thee, witch! the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
2 Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
1 Witch. Thou art kind.
3 Witch. And I another.
1 Witch. I myself have all the other;

I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his penthouse lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary sev'n-nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd.
Look what I have.

2 Witch. Show me, show me.

1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come

[*A Drum is heard.*]

3 Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The Weird Sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace!—the charm's wound up.

The Witches huddle together in the darkness as Macbeth and Banquo, followed at some distance by their soldiers, move towards them. Macbeth and Banquo are returning from a great victory over the enemies of King Duncan, and although the day has been a foul one the victory has made it seem fair. As they approach the witches the storm seems to become worse, and Macbeth says to Banquo:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

As they move forward Banquo sees the witches in his path. He stops suddenly saying to Macbeth:

What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' the Earth,
And yet are on't—Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,

By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can: what are you?

1 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

2 Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

3 Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Ban. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair?—I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then, to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

1 Witch. Hail!

2 Witch. Hail!

3 Witch. Hail!

1 Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

3 Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

All Three. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
I know I'm Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence; or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting: speak, I charge you.

As Macbeth moves towards the witches to detain them they vanish into the air from whence they came.

4. As he and Banquo are left in wonderment at the appearance and prophecies of these strange spirits, messengers come upon them from the King with the news that the Thane of Cawder has turned traitor, has been condemned to death, and his title conferred upon Macbeth. Thus, almost before the swell of the wind in these witches have vanished has died away, two of their prophecies are true, Macbeth is already Thane of Glamis by the death of his father. Now he is Thane of Cawder. What is his conclusion? Why, that these witches have told him the truth; that he will become king. This belief fires within him all the old desire to become king at any cost. He cannot wait until he gets home to his own castle to tell his wife, but sends a swift runner to her bearing the news in a letter. In the following scene we see Lady Macbeth alone in a room in Macbeth's castle reading the last part of this letter.

Lady M. "They met me in the day of success: and I have learn'd by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burn'd in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanish'd. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the King, who all-hail'd me Thane of Cawdor; *by which title, before, these Weird Sisters saluted me, and referr'd me to the coming on of time, with* Hail, king that shalt be! *This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."*

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chástise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.—

Enter a Messenger.
What is your tidings?
Mess. The King comes here to-night.
Lady M. Thou art mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.
Mess. So please you, it is true. Our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him;
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.
Lady M. Give him tending;
He brings great news.— [*Exit* Messenger.

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.—Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me from the crown to th' toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor break peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on Nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry *Hold, hold!*—

Enter MACBETH
Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.
Macb. My dearest love,

Duncan comes here to-night.
Lady M. And when goes hence?
Macb. To-morrow—as he purposes.
Lady M. O, never
Shall Sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters: to beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macb. We will speak further.
Lady M. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me.

5. That afternoon King Duncan comes to Macbeth's castle. It is a beautiful day, and as the King stands before the castle walls and watches the many swallows flying about their nests, he seems to feel a pleasure and a deep peace in the hospitality that awaits him. He says to Banquo:

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

He is received by Lady Macbeth and Macbeth with every show of welcome, and that evening a banquet is given in the great hall in honor of the King.

It is not hard to understand that Macbeth was not at ease as he sat at the banquet table with his King, his cousin, and his guest, and with thought of murder on his mind. At the first chance for putting aside the courtesies of a host, he slipped away from the banquet room to be alone by himself, and to fight over the old question of killing Duncan in order to make himself king. The uppermost thought in his mind now is, not the question of right or wrong, but the question of success or failure. Can

he escapes the consequences here? Can he "get by" with it? He cares little for the consequences in a life to come. He says to himself:

Macb. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on th' other side.—

Enter Lady MACBETH

How now! what news?

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady M. Know you not he has?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which should be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you 'dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou lack that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would,*
Like the poor cat i' the adage?
Macb. Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.
Lady M. What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They've made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I've given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains on't out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this.
Macb. If we should fail—
Lady M. We fail.
But, screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep

Their drenchèd natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

This convinces Macbeth. Here is a way to put the guilt upon another. Here is a chance to escape the punishment of men. This is enough; and although the deed is an unnatural one Macbeth is ready to see it through. He says:

I'm settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

6. A few hours after this the guests have all retired, many of them drugged with the wine Lady Macbeth has prepared for them. Macbeth is alone with a servant in a dimly lighted antechamber of the castle. From this room a hallway leads to the king's chamber, where Duncan is sleeping, soundly guarded by two drugged and drunken grooms. In marked contrast to the beautiful weather of the afternoon, a storm is now coming up in the distance. Far off the ominous roll of muffled thunder may be heard. The wind begins to whistle about the castle walls. Mingled with these sounds there comes now and then the mournful howl of the wolf, the weird hoot of the owl, and the nervous chirrup of the crickets, all signs in Macbeth time of trouble and death. When everything seems ready and safe for the "terrible feat" Lady Macbeth is to strike gently on the bell as a signal to Macbeth. Macbeth sends the servant out saying:

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

The servant goes out and Macbeth is left alone. For a long time he stands motionless, listening for the slightest sound within the castle, and alert to the muffled noises of the night without. When he starts to move he seems almost afraid to disturb his own stillness. As he turns slowly to go towards the king's chamber his overwrought imagination creates in the air before him the shadowy changing vision of a dagger. As he sees this spectral dagger before him he exclaims:

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw:
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.—
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before.—There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes.—Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
Towards his design
Moves like a ghost.—Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.—Whiles I threat he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cool breath gives.

[A bell rings.

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me—
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to Heaven or to Hell.

Macbeth goes cautiously down the hallway to the king's chamber, and we are left alone with the noises of the night. In vain we strain our ears for sounds from the king's chamber. Suddenly, stealthily Lady Macbeth comes into the room. She thinks she is very bold but as a matter of fact

she is very nervous. She is very human. She has been drinking some wine to strengthen her for this terrible occasion, for she says of the drunken grooms whose snores she can hear:

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.—Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I've drugged their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.
Macb. [*Within.*] Who's there? what, ho!
Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. Th' attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.—My husband!

Macbeth comes in with the bloodstained daggers in his hands. His body is trembling. His face is pale. All his usual strength and power seems to have left him. He seems to be pursued by a terrible horror. He says to Lady Macbeth:

I've done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?
Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?
Macb. When?
Lady M. Now.
Macb. As I descended?
Lady M. Ay.
Macb. Hark! Who lies i' the second chamber?
Lady M. Donalbain.
Macb. [*Looking on his hands.*] This is a sorry sight.
Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
Macb. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them

Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodged together.

Macb. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen!" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands,
Listening their fear: I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"

Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.

Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce Amen?
I had most need of blessing and Amen
Stuck in my throat.

Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways: so, it will make us mad.

Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep"—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care;
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast—

Lady M. What do you mean?

Macb. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more—Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose,
Give me the daggers!
If he do bleed,

I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;
For it must seem their guilt.

Lady Macbeth takes the daggers and goes into the king's chamber, leaving Macbeth alone. He seems unconscious of everything about him; unconscious of the noises of the night and the danger of discovery. He is stupified by the terrible sin against himself that he has committed. He is aroused from this stupor by a sharp knocking at the outer door of the room. Instinctively his blood-stained hands come towards his throat, and he says:

Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
Making the green—one red.

Lady Macbeth comes back from the king's chamber, and seeing Macbeth's unmanned condition she shows him her blood-stained hands and says:

My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white.

Instantly her heart does become white for there comes another knocking at the outer door.

I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*] Hark! more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

[*Knocking within.*

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst.

Lady Macbeth hurries Macbeth out and the knocking grows louder and louder, more and more clamorous, until it aroused a drunken porter who staggers into the room with a lantern in his hand.

There is a strange irony in this scene. The same wine that has made Lady Macbeth bold, and has made the grooms unconscious of their duty to the King and the murder possible, has made this fellow so drunk that he thinks he is the doorkeeper of hell, and that this knocking is the insistent effort of those who want to get into the warmer regions. This fellow has undoubtedly been drugged, for he finds great difficulty in shaking off his drowsiness.

Port. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key.—[*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer that hang'd himself on the expectation of plenty. Come in time; have napkins enough about you; here you sweat for't. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you?—But this place is too cold for Hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking.*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

The porter staggers over to the outer door, and after a great deal of difficulty succeeds in opening it. He lets in Macduff and Lennox who have been ordered by the King to arouse him early for the next day's journey. After a brief conversation between the porter and these men, Macbeth come into the room, having washed the blood from his hands and regained some of his normal composure. He sends Macduff into the King's chamber to arouse the King. Macduff discovers the murdered King, rushes back into the room crying out:

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

Macb. }
Len. } What's the matter?

Macd. Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope

The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building.
Macb. What is't you say? the life?
Len. Mean you his Majesty?
Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.—

Macbeth and Lennox go into the King's chamber and Macduff calls out:

Awake, awake!—
Ring the alarum-bell.—Murder and treason!—
Banquo and Malcolm! Donalbain! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo! all!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. [*Alarum-bell rings.*

The alarum-bell rings. Lady Macbeth, Banquo and Fleance, Malcolm and Donalbain,—the whole household is aroused and hurry into the room in great confusion. Macbeth and Lennox return from Duncan's chamber, and Macbeth explains to his guests in the midst of this confusion that when he had seen the sleeping grooms with the daggers unwiped upon their pillows he became so furious that he killed them. Malcolm and Donalbain fearing for their lives flee from Scotland, and the murder is laid to them and to the dead grooms. In due course of time Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are made king and queen of Scotland. The great ambition of their lives is at last realized. But, Oh, at what a cost!

7. It often happens that the things we desire most lose their charm when we possess them, especially if in gaining them we lose our own souls. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth had thought that to possess the throne of Scotland would bring them great honor and happiness. It merely gave them power to completely destroy themselves. One might think that a queen would want for nothing, yet we hear Lady Macbeth, the queen, saying to herself in the stillness of her own room:

Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:

'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.—

Macbeth, too, is ill at ease. He cannot sleep well at night, and in the day his mind is not at peace. We hear him saying to Lady Macbeth:

Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstacy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Macbeth cannot forget the prophecies of the Witches, that Banquo's children shall become kings. Macbeth has paid too dearly for the throne to be willing for the children of other men to inherit it. He determines to thwart the Witches. He gives a banquet for his thanes, invites Banquo and his only son Fleance, and then hires common thugs to waylay and kill them.

It is late at night when the guests assemble for this banquet. Banquo is not there. Macduff, who begins to suspect Macbeth, also is not there. As the guests enter the banquet hall, Lady Macbeth takes a seat upon a chair of state apart from the guests, but Macbeth mingles with the guests and says to them:

You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macb. Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host. Our hostess keeps her state;
But in best time we will require her welcome.
Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;
For my heart speaks they're welcome.

At this formal speech the lords and ladies bow deeply and Macbeth says:

See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.—
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst.

Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.

The lords and ladies fall to eating and drinking, and Macbeth unnoticed by his guests goes to one of the entrances to the room where in the darkness the two murderers he has hired to kill Banquo are waiting. As he looks at one of these fellows he says:

There's blood upon thy face.
Mur. 'Tis Banquo's, then.
Macb. 'Tis better thee without than him within.
Is he dispatch'd?
Mur. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance.
Mur. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.
Macb. [*Aside.*] Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock;
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound-in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?
Mur. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenchèd gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.
Macb. Thanks for that.
[*Aside.*] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for th' present.—Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear't, ourself, again.

By this time the guests are getting uneasy and Lady Macbeth who has an eye on them goes to Macbeth and says:

My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome.
Macb. Sweet remembrancer!—

Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!
Len. May't please your Highness sit.
Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance.
Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your Highness
To grace us with your royal company.
Macb. The table's full!
Len. Here is a place reserved, sir.
Macb. Where?
Len. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your Highness?

The thing that moved Macbeth was the ghost of Banquo seated in Macbeth's place at the table. The guests cannot see this for it is a fiction of Macbeth's imagination, but to Macbeth it is real. He feels his guilt and tries to shake it off, exclaiming:

Which of you have done this?
Lords. What, my good lord?
Macb. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.
Ross. Gentlemen, rise; his Highness is not well.
Lady M. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well: if much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion;
Feed, and regard him not.

The guests pretend to return to their eating, and Lady Macbeth says quietly to Macbeth:

Are you a man?
Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the Devil.
Lady M. O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macb. Pr'ythee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?—
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.—
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [GHOST *vanishes.*

Lady M. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady M. Fie, for shame!

Lady Macbeth turns quickly to her guests leaving Macbeth to say to himself:

Blood hath been shed ere now: i' the olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal,
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been,
That when the brains were out the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal gashes on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macb. I do forget:—
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down.—Give me some wine, fill full.—
I drink to th' general joy of the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss:
Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.

The lords and ladies lift their glasses saying:

"Our duties, and the pledge;"

And as Macbeth turns to take his place at the table there is the ghost of Banquo again before him.

Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.
Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
Macb. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [GHOST *vanishes.*
Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still.
Lady M. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.
Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a Summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.
Ross. What sights, my lord?
Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.
Len. Good night; and better health

Attend his Majesty!
Lady M. A kind good night to all!

Lady Macbeth hurries the guests out and Macbeth sinks into a chair saying:

It will have blood; they say blood will have blood:

When the sound of the departing guests has died away and Lady Macbeth has returned to his side, Macbeth says to her:

How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?
Lady M. Did you send to him, sir?
Macb. I will send:
There is not one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow—
Ay, and betimes I will—to th' Weird Sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I'm bent to know,
By the worst mean, the worst.
I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.
Lady M. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macb. Come, we'll to sleep.

8. The next day Macbeth goes to find the witches again. The place where these witches meet is a barren cave. In this is a burning cauldron that blazes up intermittently lighting the cave with a lurid uncertain glare. About this cauldron the witches meet, throw in their vile concoctions, and brew their hellish broth of trouble for Macbeth. Everything is just right for the working of their charms, for the First Witch says:

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
2 Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
3 Witch. Harpy cries:—'tis time, 'tis time.
1 Witch. Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.—

Toad, that under the cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmèd pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

2 *Witch.* Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing—
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

3 *Witch.* Scale of dragon; tooth of wolf;
Witch's mummy; maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark;
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark;
Liver of blaspheming Jew;
Gall of goat; and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the Moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips;
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab—
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

2 *Witch.* Cool it with a báboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter MACBETH

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I cónjure you, by that which you profess—Answer me
To what I ask you.

1 Witch. Speak.

2 Witch. Demand.

3 Witch. We'll answer.

1 Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters.

Macb. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

In the dim light of the cave there appears the apparition of a man's head clad in armor, symbolic of Macbeth's own head. As Macbeth sees it he cries out:

Tell me, thou unknown power—

1 Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

1 App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
Beware the Thane of Fife.—Dismiss me: enough.

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;
Thou'st harp'd my fear aright: but one word more—

1 Witch. He will not be commanded: here's another,
More potent than the first.

The apparition of a naked child covered with blood appears, symbolic of Macduff who was not born of woman but was cut from his mother's side. This apparition calls out:

2 App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

2 App.—Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

Macb. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double-sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;

A third apparition appears, this time a child crowned, carrying in his hand the branch of a tree. This apparition is symbolic of Malcolm, the son of the dead king, who when he comes with an army against Macbeth has them carry branches of trees to hide themselves. As Macbeth sees this apparition he exclaims:

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king?
All. Listen, but speak not to't.
3 App. Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.
Macb. That will never be:
Who can impress the forest? bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!
Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me—if your art
Can tell so much—shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?
All. Seek to know no more.
Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know—
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?
1 Witch. Show!
2 Witch. Show!
3 Witch. Show!
All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

In rapid succession there appear the apparitions of eight kings. They all look like Banquo and are followed by the ghost of Banquo. As Macbeth looks upon them he realizes that Banquo's children will be kings; and his disappointment knows no bounds.

Macb. What, is this so?

But the witches have disappeared.

Macb. Where are they? Gone?—Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursèd in the calendar!—
Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX, who has been waiting outside

Len. What's your Grace's will?
Macb. Saw you the Weird Sisters?
Len. No, my lord.
Macb. Came they not by you?
Len. No indeed, my lord.
Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse': who was't came by?
Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macb. Fled to England!
Len. Ay, my good lord.
Macb. Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be't thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool;
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

9. Macbeth keeps his word. He sends murderous men to Macduff's castle who ruthlessly slaughter his wife and babes.

In the meantime Macduff had gone to England, found Malcolm, and had raised an army to return to Scotland to try to overthrow Macbeth. There in England a messenger comes to him with the words:

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd:

When Macduff hears this he is like a man struck a great blow. He puts his hands to the sides of his forehead and pulls his hat hard upon his brows. Malcolm feeling the terrible depth of his grief says:

Merciful Heaven!—
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:
Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.
Macd. My children too?
Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.
Macd. And I must be from thence!—
My wife kill'd too?
Ross. I've said.
Mal. Dispute it like a man.
Macd. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did Heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am;
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!
Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword:
Blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue!—But, gentle Heaven,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring Thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he escape,
Heaven forgive him too!

If Macduff has a chance to kill Macbeth in a fair fight and does not succeed, he is perfectly willing that heaven shall forgive Macbeth.

10. We see but little of Lady Macbeth in the closing scenes of this tragedy. Her health has rapidly declined, and the doctor has tried in vain to find

the cause. A servant-woman has told him that she has seen Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep and has heard her say strange things while in this state. For two nights the doctor and this servant have watched in the room where Lady Macbeth has been seen walking in her sleep. The doctor has hoped to find out something that would help him understand Lady Macbeth's trouble. A third night they have waited long for Lady Macbeth to walk, but nothing has happened. The Doctor says to the servant:

Doct. I have two nights watch'd with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walk'd?

Gentlew. Since his Majesty went into the field against the English forces, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what at any time have you heard her say?

Gentlew. That, sir, I will not report after her.

Doct. You may to me; and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlew. Neither to you nor to any one; having no witness to confirm my speech. Lo you, here she comes!

This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep.

Lady Macbeth enters as noiselessly as a ghost. She is dressed in a long white nightrobe, her long hair is loose over her shoulders, her face is pale and infinitely sad, and her eyes are open with a vacant stare. She carries a lighted candle in her hand as if in search of something. She puts this down on a table and begins to half-rub her hands as in the act of washing them. She thinks there is a spot of blood upon her hand, and in her nightmare she is trying to erase it.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Out, damnèd spot! out, I say!—One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't. Fie, my lord, fie; a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlew. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. O! O! O!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gentlew. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed!

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlew. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.—
God, God forgive us all!—Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:

Gentlew. Good night, good doctor.

Doct. I think, but dare not speak.

After this it is not surprising that when Macbeth asks, "How does your patient, Doctor," the Doctor replies:

Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macb. Cure her of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;

Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And with some sweet-oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.—
Come, put mine armour on.

11. So many of Macbeth's thanes join with Malcolm and Macduff that Macbeth entrenches himself in his strong castle of Dunsinane. We see Macbeth with soldiers about him in a great room in this castle. All is busy for the defense. Macbeth calls out:

Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still "They come!" Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not reinforced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.

Right in the heels of this boast there comes from a nearby room a startling sound, and as they all suddenly listen, Macbeth asks:

What is that noise?
Seyt. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

A servant goes out to see what the trouble is and Macbeth says to himself:

I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have quail'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.—

Re-enter the servant

Wherefore was that cry?

Seyt. The Queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way of dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

This from the man who thought to be king of Scotland would bring happiness!

A messenger runs into the room in great excitement, falls at Macbeth's feet saying:

Gracious my lord,
As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave!

Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee; if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.—
I pall in resolution, and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane;" and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!

Ring the alarum-bell!—Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

12. Macbeth goes out to fight against his enemies, but he fights in a losing battle. More of his followers desert him, and at last he finds himself alone on the battlefield in defeat. He is about to fall upon his sword and take his own life as the old Romans used to do, but he has sunk down to that level of life where he would rather spend his energies in killing others. He says to himself:

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

At this point Macduff comes upon him. Macduff has been looking for Macbeth. He wants to meet him front to front and be revenged for the foul murder of his wife and babes. When he sees Macbeth he cries with savage power:

Turn, hell-hound, turn!
Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.
Macd. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

Macduff rushes upon Macbeth and the two men fight, Macduff with all the fury of vengeance, Macbeth with all the power born of the belief that none of woman born can harm him. With this belief Macbeth seems to fight with supernatural power. In vain Macduff tries to wound him, but Macbeth parries every blow, and at last he cries out in triumph:

Thou losest labour:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmèd life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macd. Despair thy charm;
And let the angel whom thou still hast served

Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.
Macb. Accursèd be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.—I'll not fight with thee.
Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit
"Here may you see the tyrant."
Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: lay on, Macduff,
And damn'd be he that first cries "Hold, enough!"

Again the two men fight: Macduff with renewed fury, Macbeth with fainting courage. Macbeth is driven from the field in defeat, his head cut from his body and brought to Malcolm, who is proclaimed King of Scotland.

Thus it was that an evil suggestion used by the inordinate ambition of a great man, bore its natural fruitage of sin and death.

HAMLET

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CONDENSED FOR LECTURE-RECITAL

BY

R. D. T. HOLLISTER

1. THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET is probably the best known piece of English literature outside the Bible. It is generally regarded as Shakespeare's greatest play. It is the longest of his plays, requiring nearly five hours for a full stage production. In condensing it into an hour and a half for oral interpretation large portions of its wealth of thought and its rich insight into human life must be omitted. However, the main course of the events in this great tragedy may be clearly followed in a brief review, and much of the reality of human struggle in and about the life of Hamlet may be personally felt.

It is difficult to state definitely and concisely the nature of the tragedy in the life of Hamlet. Perhaps it is the tragedy that comes to all who think much and unselfishly about the ills that human life is heir to, and about the natural and social forces that keep the individual from relieving these ills. It may be the universal tragedy of human helplessness in the presence of human knowledge of evil; the tragedy that lies in the very power to think with "God-like reason" as Hamlet says, and yet not have the force and freedom to act with God-like justice.

Human life seems to be so orderd that "the oppressor's wrong, the pangs of disprized love, the law's delay, the insolence of office" must be known and endured. What greater tragedy can there be than to see wrong and neither be able to right it nor escape from it? What greater torment to the sensitive soul than to see injustice and inhumanity clearly, and to hate it passionately, and yet be held from action by the strong bands of reason and circumstance? It is the tragedy of all men that the same reason that impells us to action also keeps us from action. Human thought is sometimes like a strong man bound and forced to witness the torture of his own child. Thus it was with Hamlet. Prompted by every reason for revenge in heaven and hell he had "to unpack his heart with words." Because he had the power "of thinking too precisely on the event" he had to endure the torture of delay in action.

This man Hamlet, whose intense inner struggle against outer circum-

stances finds a response in us all, was a prince of Denmark in those far-off times when England paid tribute to the Danish crown. He was the son of the noble King Hamlet of Denmark and the beautiful Queen Gertrude. To him his father was the finest man that he had even seen, and his mother was his ideal of womanhood. He loved his parents dearly, and his life up to the events of this play was in general happy. As a child at the old castle of Elsinore he had romped a thousand time with Yorick the favorite funmaker of the court. As a young lad he had played with Ophelia, the little daughter of Polonius, one of his father's advisers. Later as a young man and a college student he came to love her dearly. He grew up at court but without caring for its powers. Although he was a prince he had no ambition for the throne, no natural or acquired taste for the affairs of state. He liked the sport of fencing and was highly skilled in the use of the foil, but his chief desire was to study and think. He had a hunger to know life and its meaning. History, literature, and philosophy interested him. The seclusion of old libraries and the fellowship of kindred minds attracted him. He spent much time at the old university of Wittenberg. At the age of thirty we find him still at Wittenberg with no worry over the affairs at Elsinore. He often thought of Elsinore, of his father and mother, and of sweet Ophelia, and of the pleasure he would have in seeing them again, but he was contented to read and reflect on the experiences and thoughts of men. This contentment, however, was abruptly broken by a message from Elsinore saying that his father had suddenly died. Hamlet hurried back to Elsinore with the first great personal sorrow of his life heavy upon his heart.

There he found his mother in tears, his uncle Claudius apparently in sorrow, and the people about the court in mourning. Everyone seemed to be in sympathy with Hamlet and his deep grief. But scarcely was the funeral over when his mother married his uncle Claudius, and the mourning ceremonies were changed into the marriage festivities. Thus to Hamlet's heartache was added a sense of great impropriety and wrong. He could not so soon forget his father's death. He could not understand his mother's hasty action. His faith in her was violently disturbed. He went about the new court in deep mourning with a great sadness upon him. He refused to enter into the marriage festivities. He, the sad prince, was a blot upon the new king's happiness, and an irritation to his mother.

One day at court after the usual business has been dispatched the Queen, feeling the irritation of Hamlet's black garments and his melancholy mood, says to him:

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not forever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 't is common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Cold comfort for a man with Hamlet's heartache, to which he replies:

Ay, madam, it is common.
Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
Hamlet. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

He refuses to be comforted, and when he is left alone in this room where his father and mother had held public audience together for so many years as loving rulers of Denmark, he feels the burden of life very heavy upon him, and he longs to escape in eternal forgetfulness from an overwhelming sense of wrong in the world. We hear him saying to himself:

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That is should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
So loving to my mother

That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears,—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Then I to Hercules.
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

2. While Hamlet is in this mood Horatio, an old college friend whom he has not seen for a long time, comes into the room followed by Marcellus and Bernardo officers of the nightwatch on the castle walls. They have come to Hamlet with startling news. Horatio says:

Hail to your lordship!
Hamlet. I am glad to see you well:
Horatio—or I do forget myself.
Horatio. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Hamlet. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?—
Horatio. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Hamlet. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Horatio. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.
Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father,—methings I see my father.
Horatio. O where, my lord?
Hamlet. In my mind's eye, Horatio.
Horatio. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
Hamlet. He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.

Horatio. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Hamlet. Saw? who?
Horatio. My lord, the king your father.
Hamlet. The king my father!
Horatio. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.
Hamlet. For God's love, let me hear.
Horatio. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.
Hamlet. But where was this?
Marcellus. My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.
Hamlet. Did you not speak to it?
Horatio. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none; yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.
Hamlet. 'T is very strange.
Horatio. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 't is true;

And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.
Hamlet. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?
Marcellus. We do, my lord.
Hamlet. Arm'd, say you?
Marcellus. Arm'd, my lord.
Hamlet. From top to toe?
Marcellus. My lord, from head to foot.
Hamlet. Then saw you not his face?
Horatio. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.
Hamlet. What, look'd he frowningly?
Horatio. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Hamlet. Pale, or red?
Horatio. Nay, very pale.
Hamlet. And fix'd his eyes upon you?
Horatio. Most constantly.
Hamlet. I would I had been there.
Horatio. It would have much amaz'd you.
Hamlet. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?
Horatio. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
Bernardo. Longer, longer.
Horatio. Not when I saw't.
Hamlet. His beard was grizzled? no?
Horatio. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.
Hamlet. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 't will walk again.
Horatio. I warrant you it will.
Hamlet. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare ye well;

Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.
All. Our duty to your honour.
Hamlet. Your love, as mine to you; farewell.

[*Exeunt Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo*]
My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

3. That night at midnight we see Hamlet with Horatio and Marcellus waiting on a platform on the castle walls where the Ghost has appeared. The night is cold and dimly lighted by a thin low moon. As the men wait in silent suspense the air seems unusually penetrating, and Hamlet says in an undertone to Horatio:

Hamlet. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
Horatio. It is a nipping and an eager air.
Hamlet. What hour now?
Horatio. I think it lacks of twelve.
Marcellus. No, it is struck
Horatio. Indeed? I heard it not; then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

Enter GHOST
Horatio. Look, my lord, it comes!
Hamlet. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd;
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell;
Be thy intents wicked or charitable;
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane; O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements;
What may this mean,

That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[GHOST *beckons* HAMLET]

Horatio. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone. But do not go with it.
Hamlet. It will not speak; then I will follow it.
Harotio. Do not, my lord.
Hamlet. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again; I'll follow it.
Horatio. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
And there assume some other horrible form,
And draw you into madness? think of it;
Hamlet. It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.
Marcellus. You shall not go, my lord.
Hamlet. Hold off your hands!
Horatio. Be rul'd; you shall not go.
Hamlet. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve. [GHOST *beckons*]
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen;
[*Breaking from them*]
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

4. The Ghost leads Hamlet away from his friends into the deeper shadows of another part of the platform. Hamlet fearing that he may be led into danger stops and demands:

Hamlet. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.
Ghost. Mark me.
Hamlet. I will.
Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
Hamlet. Alas, poor ghost!
Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
Hamlet. Speak; I am bound to hear.
Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
Hamlet. What?
Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away.
Now, Hamlet, hear:
It's given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Hamlet. O my prophetic soul!
Mine uncle!
Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulerate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts—
Won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;

Brief let me be. Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
And sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And gins to pale his uneffectual fire;
Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me.

The Ghost moves away into the shadows of the night, and Hamlet faint with this experience says:

Hold, hold, my heart:
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, yes, by heaven!
I have sworn it.

When Horatio and Marcellus come to Hamlet they are very anxious to know what has taken place, and although his impulse impels him to tell them, his reason keeps him from doing so. He goes so far as to say there is "much offence," and "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," but more he will not tell. He makes them take the oath, "Never make known what you have seen tonight." When they have promised Hamlet realizing the heavy task that has been put upon him says to himself:

"The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

5. Thus it was that to Hamlet's deep sorrow for the death of his father is added this unutterable sense of a wrong that he alone must set right. His own best nature as well as the promptings of the Ghost impel him to revenge, but his own reason as well as the injunction of the Ghost tells him that he must keep his own fair name untainted in the eyes of the people of Denmark. He cannot rush upon the King with a rapier and run him through. Such an act would mark Hamlet as a madman and a fool, and the King would be called a martyr. Hamlet must have evidence of the King's guilt that the people of Denmark will accept and that he himself cannot question. Now he has nothing but his own melancholy suspicions and the words of a ghost, a ghost that may deceive him to destroy him. He dare not tell others that the King is a murderer, for they would not believe him, and the King would be put on guard. Thus Hamlet would defeat himself. He can do nothing except wait for evidence. In the meantime he must live in the presence of the King. He must let his heart break as he holds his tongue. He must say and do strange things to hide his inner thoughts. His very love for Ophelia must be broken for her sake. He must be spied upon by the hirelings of a suspicious and guilty king. He must be misjudged by the people about the court. He must be torn by conflicting feelings towards his mother. He must see Claudius in his father's place at his mother's side. He must endure this torture of the mind and heart.

As time goes by and the lenten season comes on some traveling players come to Elsinore, and Hamlet sees in them a chance to test the guilt of the king. One of these players at Hamlet's wish gives the lines describing

the grief of Hecuba at the death of her husband, Priam, King of Troy. So deeply is this player moved by the story that his eyes fill with tears and his voice breaks with emotion. As the group of players, as welcome guests at Elsinore, start to follow Polonius, Hamlet stops the leader, saying:

Can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

1 Player. Ay, my lord.

Can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

Hamlet. We'll ha 't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in 't, could ye not?

1 Player. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not.

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? what would he do;
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appall the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculty of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettl'd rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villian? breaks my pate across?

Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by th' nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villian!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villian!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! Sure, this is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon 't! foh!

About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil; and the devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

6. While Hamlet is planning to catch the conscience of the King, the King is planning to find, if he can, the real reason for Hamlet's strange behavior. Polonius thinks he knows the cause. In order to understand this let us go back in the story a little.

Ophelia has a brother a little younger than Hamlet whose name is Laertes. Laertes is a student in France and has received permission from the King to return to his pleasures as a student. Laertes loves Ophelia dearly, and as he is about to go away he says to her:

My necessaries are embark'd; farewell:
And, sister, let me hear from you.
Ophelia. Do you doubt that?
Laertes. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
Ophelia. No more but so?
Laertes. Think it no more;
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of the whole State.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Ophelia. I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.
Laertes. O, fear me not.
I stay too long; but here my father comes.

[*Enter Polonius*]

Polonius. Yet here, Laertes? aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrell; but being in,
Bear 't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

Laertes. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Polonius. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

Laertes. Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Ophelia. 'T is my memory lock'd,
And your yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laertes. Farewell.

As Laertes leaves them Polonius says:

What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Ophelia. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Polonius. Marry, well bethought.
'T is told me, he hath very oft of late

Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so—as so 't is put on me,
And that in way of caution—I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.
Ophelia. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.
Polonius. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his—tenders, as you call them?
Ophelia. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
Polonius. Marry, I'll teach you; think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Tender yourself more dearly;
Or—you'll tender me a fool.
Ophelia. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honourable fashion.
Polonius. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.
Ophelia. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
Polonius. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth
Have you so slander any moment leisure
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you; come your ways.
Ophelia. I shall obey, my lord.

7. As time passes by Ophelia confides what follows between her and Hamlet to her father, and we find Polonius one day with the King and the queen, and hear him saying:

I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.
King. O, speak of that; that I do long to hear.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

Polonius. My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Polonius. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 't is true; 't is true 't is pity,
And pity 't is 't true: a foolish figure!
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.
I have a daughter—have whilst she is mine—
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this; now gather, and surmise.

[*Reads the letter*]

"To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,—"
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; "beautified" is a vile phrase.

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Polonius. Good madam, stay awhile. I will be faithful.

[*Reads*]

"Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers. I have not art to reckon

my groans; but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.
Thine evermore, most dear lady,
Whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET."
This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All give to mine ear.
King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?
Polonius. I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed—a short tale to make—
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.
King. Do you think 't is this?
Polonius. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
That I have positively said "'T is so,"
When it prov'd otherwise?
King. Not that I know.
Polonius. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

Polonius is willing to have his head cut off, if his opinion is not true.

King. How may we try it further?
Polonius. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together.
Here in the lobby.
Queen. So he does, indeed.
Polonius. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
King. We will try it.

8. A short time after this the King, the Queen, Polonius and Ophelia are preparing for this test of Hamlet's madness.

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 't were by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
If 't be th' affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.
Queen. I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness
Ophelia. Madam, I wish it may.
[*Exit* QUEEN]

Polonius. Ophelia, walk you here.
Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness.
I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

When Hamlet comes into the room he does not see Ophelia. He seems lost in deep thought. No one hears him as he says to himself:

To be, or not to be,—that is the question;
Whether 't is nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die,—to sleep,—
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'t is a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep,—
To sleep! perchance to dream! ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

When we have shuffl'd off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action. Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Ophelia. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

Hamlet. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Ophelia. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Hamlet. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Ophelia. My honour'd lord, I know right well you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Hamlet. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Ophelia. My lord!

Hamlet. Are you fair?

Ophelia. What means your lordship?

Hamlet. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Ophelia. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Hamlet. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. I did love you once.

Ophelia. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Hamlet. You should not have believ'd me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it; I lov'd you not.

Ophelia. I was the more deceiv'd.

Hamlet. Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Ophelia. At home, my lord.

Hamlet. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

Ophelia. O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Hamlet. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Ophelia. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Hamlet. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has

given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantoness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit*]

Ophelia. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh;
O, woe is me,
T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

After overhearing this the King said to Polonius:

Love! his affections do not that way tend;
There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger; which to prevent,
He shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute.
What think you on 't?

Polonius. It shall do well; but if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him to show his grief, if she find him not, to England send him.

King. It shall be so;
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

9. On the night of the play to be given before the King we find Hamlet and Horatio in a large room in the castle where the players are to perform the play called "The Murder of Gonzago." They are waiting for the audience and players to come. Horatio is Hamlet's dearest friend; the one man whom he can trust, a man of unusually even temper. Hamlet says to him:

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.
Horatio. O, my dear lord,—
Hamlet. Nay, do not think I flatter,
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingl'd,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.
Something too much of this.
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.
They are coming to the play; I must be idle.
Get you a place.

The King, the Queen, Ophelia, Polonius and other members of the court come into the room. The Queen invites Hamlet to sit beside her, but he takes a place at Ophelia's feet where he can watch the play and the King at the same time. Upon the stage which has been arranged in one end of the room there appear a Player King and a Player Queen. It is a scene in a king's garden. The king is about to take his afternoon's rest. The Player Queen seems much in love with her husband and declares that if he should die she will never marry again, saying, "None wed the second but who killed the first." The Player King tells her:

'T is deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep
Player Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain!

At this point in the action Hamlet say to his mother:

Hamlet. Madam, how like you this play?
Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.
Hamlet. O, but she'll keep her word.
King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?
Hamlet. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' th' world.
King. What do you call the play?
Hamlet. The Mouse-trap. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon; 't is a knavish piece of work, but what o' that? your majesty and we have free souls, it touches us not.

A third actor comes upon the stage, bends over the sleeping Player King and pours something into his ear. At this Hamlet cries out:

He poisons him i' th' garden for 's estate. His name's Gonzago.
You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

This is too much for the King. His conscience is caught. He rises in great confusion crying:

Give me some light! Away!
All. Lights, lights, lights!

The King and his followers hurry from the room leaving Hamlet to say to Horatio:

Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Horatio. Very well, my lord.

Hamlet. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Horatio. I did very well note him.

Hamlet. Ah, ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!

But before the actors can bring the musical instruments Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, old acquaintances of Hamlet who have been engaged by the King to spy upon him, come to Hamlet saying that his mother wants to see him in her own room before he goes to bed. A few minutes later Polonius comes with the same request. Hamlet answers, "I will come by-and-by." When they have left him he says to himself:

'T is now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

10. On the way to his mother's room he comes upon the King trying in vain to pray. Instinctively his hand seeks the hilt of his rapier and he says, "Now might I do it pat," but he checks himself. If he kills the King at prayer the King will go to heaven. This would not be revenge. This is the reason that Hamlet gives, but his real reason for not killing the King is that he has no evidence to justify such an act before the people of Denmark.

In Queen Gertrude's room Polonius comes to the Queen saying:

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him;
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll hide me e'en here.

Pray you, be round with him.

Queen. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.

POLONIUS hides behind the arras that hang about the room just as HAMLET enters.

Hamlet. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Hamlet. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Hamlet. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet! What's the matter now?
Have you forgot me?

Hamlet. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Hamlet. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge:
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

Polonius. [*cries out*] What, ho! help, help, help!

Hamlet. [*Drawing his rapier*] How now! a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!

He stabs through the curtains mortally wounding Polonius who cries:

O, I am slain

Queen. O me! what hast thou done?

Hamlet. Nay, I know not;
Is it the king?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Hamlet. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king!

Hamlet. Ay, lady, 't was my word.

Hamlet lifts up the curtains and instead of finding the King as he had hoped, he finds the dead body of his sweetheart's father.

Hamlet. Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.
Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?
Hamlet. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths; O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul,
Queen. Ay me, what act,

Hamlet takes the locket containing his father's picture which he wears and contrasts it with the picture of Caudius which his mother wears.

Hamlet. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
The front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-dey in the blood is tame, it's humble,

And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this?
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire.
Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.
No more, sweet Hamlet!
Hamlet. A murderer and a villian;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!
A king of shreds and patches—

In the violence of his emotion Hamlet sees again the ghost of his father.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?
Queen. Alas, he's mad!
Hamlet. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

He seems to hear the ghost saying:

Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits;
O, step between her and her fighting soul!
Speak to her, Hamlet.
Hamlet. How is it with you, lady?
Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,

And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse?
O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?
Hamlet. On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects. Then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.
Queen. To whom do you speak this?
Hamlet. Do you see nothing there?
Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
Hamlet. Nor did you nothing hear?
Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.
Hamlet. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he liv'd!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

The ghost fades from his mind.

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain;
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.
Hamlet. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music. It is not madness
That I have uttered; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks;
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come;
Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
Hamlet. O, throw away the worser part of it,

And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
Once more, good night;
For this same lord, I do repent me

[*Pointing to* POLONIUS]

I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

11. When the King learns that Hamlet has killed Polonius he decides to send him at once to England on the pretext of collecting tribute, but with a secret commission in charge of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to have Hamlet put to death as soon as he reaches England. On the voyage Hamlet discovers this commission, substitutes another commanding the death of Rosencrantz and Guildernstern, and then by chance is taken aboard a pirate ship and returned to Denmark.

In the meantime Ophelia, grieving over the death of her father at Hamlet's hands, and over the apparent cruelty of her lover, becomes demented. Her brother Laertes returning from France thinks Hamlet is the cause of all this trouble. When word is brought to the King that Hamlet has returned to Denmark the King works Laertes into a plot to take Hamlet's life. A fencing bout between Hamlet and Laertes is to be arranged, in which Laertes is to use an unbaited, or unblunted, foil with deadly poison on its point. If Laertes fails to wound Hamlet with this the King is to give Hamlet poisoned wine to drink. As the King and Laertes are concluding this plot, the Queen comes to them saying that Ophelia has fallen into the river and is dead.

The scene that follows this is in a graveyard where Ophelia is to be buried. In this graveyard the great ones of Denmark have been buried through many generations. We may assume that Hamlet's father is buried here. There is a grim ironic humor in this scene, and a wealth of the pathos and tragedy of life. Two grave-diggers are preparing Ophelia's grave. One, an old man, has been a grave-digger here for thirty years. The other, a younger fellow, will probably be head grave-digger when the old man is gone, for even in grave-making men live to succeed their superiors. These grave-diggers have a public and impersonal interest in Ophelia's funeral. This burial that means breaking heartache to Laertes

and to Hamlet, is the occasion for an argument with them. It is as it were a time to discuss the cost of the casket or the amount of the life insurance. Like the priests who perform the ceremony these grave-diggers are interested in the traditional rights and privileges of Christian burial. There is a very nice question involved, for if Ophelia has killed herself then she is not entitled to Christian burial. If the priests did not fear the King she would be buried without the rites of the church, and consequently her soul would be lost. The old grave-digger like many other persons has heard big words which he tries to use without knowing their exact meaning. He says to the younger fellow:

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2 Clown. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 Clown. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2 Clown. Why, 't is found so.

1 Clown. It must be 'se offendo'; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform; argal she drown'd herself wittingly.

2 Clown. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

1 Clown. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes,—mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

2 Clown. But is this law?

1 Clown. Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

2 Clown. Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of christian burial.

1 Clown. Why, there thou say'st; and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 Clown. Was he a gentleman?

1 Clown. A was the first that ever bore arms.

2 Clown. Why, he had none.

1 Clown. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, Adam digg'd; could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

2 Clown. Go to.

1 Clown. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 Clown. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 Clown. I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well; but how does it well? It does well to those that do ill: now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again; come.

2 Clown. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 Clown. Ay, tell me, and unyoke.

2 Clown. Marry, now I can tell.

1 Clown. To 't.

2 Clown. Mass, I cannot tell.

1 Clown. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when you are ask'd this question next, say 'a grave-maker'; the houses that he makes lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

In the meantime Hamlet and Horatio have come into the graveyard. They do not know of Ophelia's death, but stand watching the old grave-digger from a little distance as he works on the grave and tries to sing.

1 Clown. In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O the time, for-a my behove,
O, methought there was nothing meet.

Hamlet. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Hamlet. 'T is e'en so. The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 Clown. [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipp'd me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

He digs up a skull and throws it on the dirt heap apparently without feeling, and Hamlet says:

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the knave jowls it to th' ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Horatio. It might, my lord.

Hamlet. There's another; why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery?

I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 Clown. Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Hamlet. I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in 't.

1 Clown. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

Hamlet. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine. 'T is for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1 Clown. 'T is a quick lie, sir; 't will away again, from me to you.

Hamlet. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 Clown. For no man, sir.

Hamlet. What woman, then?

1 Clown. For none, neither.

Hamlet. Who is to be buried in 't?

1 Clown. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Hamlet. How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 Clown. Of all the days i' th' year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Hamlet. How long is that since?

1 Clown. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Hamlet. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

1 Clown. Why, because a was mad. A shall recover his wits there; or, if a do not, it's no great matter there.

Hamlet. Why?

1 Clown. 'T will not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet. How came he mad?

1 Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet. How 'strangely'?

1 Clown. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Hamlet. Upon what ground?

1 Clown. Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Hamlet. How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

1 Clown. I' faith, if a be not rotten before a die a will last you some eight year or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

Hamlet. Why he more than another?

1 Clown. Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that a will keep out water a great while; and water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet. Whose was it?

1 Clown. Whose do you think it was?

Hamlet. Nay, I know not.

1 Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! A pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet. This?

1 Clown. E'en that.

Hamlet. [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest of most excellent fancy. He hath borne

me on his back a thousand times. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen? Now, get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come: make her laugh at that! Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Horatio. What's that, my lord?

Hamlet. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' th' earth?

Horatio. E'en so.

Hamlet. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull*]

Horatio. E'en so, my lord.

Hamlet. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Horatio. 'T were to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Hamlet. No, faith, not a jot; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted they might not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall t' expel the winter's flaw!
But soft! but soft! Aside! here comes the king,
The queen, the courtiers.

It is the funeral procession of Ophelia, and Hamlet notices that the full rites of burial are not being observed.

Hamlet, Who is that they follow,
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life. 'Twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark.

As they come to the grave Laertes says to the priest:

What ceremony else?

1 Priest. Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warrantise. Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet.

Laertes. Must there no more be done?

1 Priest. No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laertes. Lay her i' th' earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A minist'ring angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

This is Hamlet's first intimation that Ophelia is dead.

Hamlet. What, the fair Ophelia!

As the body is lowered into the grave the Queen scatters flowers upon it, saying:

Sweets to the sweet; farewell!
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

Laertes. Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[*Leaps into the grave*]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Hamlet can stand this no longer, and coming forward says:

What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow

Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane!

Leartes grabs Hamlet by the throat saying:

The devil take thy soul!
Hamlet. Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet, have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!
King. Pluck them asunder.
Hamlet. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
Queen. O my son, what theme?
Hamlet. I lov'd Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I;
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millon of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning sun,
Make Mount Ossa like a wart! Nay,
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and the dog will have his day.

What Hamlet means to say is that no matter how hard the strongest man may try to have his way there are forces over which he has no control.

12. The King at once hurries on the fencing bout between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet enters into this without suspicion, half-glad to have

something to do to pass the time by. The bout takes place before the King and Queen and others. Horatio is there with Hamlet. Laertes manages to use an unblunted foil without Hamlet knowing it. Almost at the first thrust Hamlet hits Laertes and the excitement is on. Hamlet seems superior to Laertes and the King stops the bout and offers Hamlet poisoned drink, but Hamlet refuses it saying:

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come.

Again they play and again Hamlet hits Laertes. The Queen rejoicing in the success of her son drinks to his health, and without knowing it drinks the poisoned wine. Laertes says to the King:

My lord, I'll hit him now.
King. I do not think't.
Laertes. [*Aside*] And yet 't is almost 'gainst my conscience.
Hamlet. Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.
Laertes. Say you so? come on.

He rushes upon Hamlet and wounds him with the poisoned foil. Hamlet feeling the sting of pain and sensing treachery rushes at Laertes incensed, strikes the poisoned foil from his hand, gets possession of it and wounds Laertes. At this the King says:

Part them; they are incens'd.
Hamlet. Nay, come again. [QUEEN *falls*]
Osric. Look to the queen there, ho!
King. She swounds to see them bleed.
Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink—O my dear Hamlet—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.
Hamlet. O villainy! Ho! let the door be lock'd!
Treachery! seek it out.
Laertes (who has fallen to the floor). It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life:
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd!
I can do no more. The king, the king's to blame.

This is the public evidence for which Hamlet has waited. Now he can kill the King and justify his act. For a moment he looks at the poisoned foil saying:

The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work!

And stabs the King calling him "incestuous, murderous, damned Dane."

Laertes dies asking Hamlet's forgiveness, which is freely given; and as Hamlet feels the poison swiftly closing in upon his life he sinks into the arms of Horatio saying:

Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st: report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.
O good Horatio! what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.
O, I die, Horatio;

Horatio lowers him gently to the floor, and bending tenderly above the pale sad face that is at last at peace from all the "whips and scorns of time," he says:

The rest is silence. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

We too may say with Horatio "good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"

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